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THE HALF-UNITED NATIONS

One envoy's recall may not make a diplomatic winter; but when two ambassadors as distinguished as Mr. Maisky and Mr. Litvinov are withdrawn in quick succession from their posts in London and Washington, and are replaced by personalities significantly less eminent, there is bound to be speculation whether both incidents may not have a common underlying cause. Had relations between Moscow and the Western Allies been known to be good, misgivings would not have arisen; the official "explanation" that Marshal Stalin wished to enjoy the benefit of his leading ambassadors' experience in Kremlin councils might have been accepted. As it is, the absence of Russia once again from the conference between President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill, attended by all their Chiefs of Staff, had already emphasised sharply Russia's growing isolation from her Allies; and concern at the ambassadorial changes was deepened by the recollection that, when in 1939 Mr. Litvinov relinquished the appointment of Commissar for Foreign Affairs, his removal was the signal for a drastic re-orientation of Russian policy. It was a signal then that the Soviet Union had ceased to hope anything from co-operation with the West in a system of collective security. Speculation has even flown to the point of suggesting that Stalin might even be prepared for a deal with an unbeaten Germany. No one who knows anything of the Russian Theatre of war will be taken in by such rumours. But it might well happen, if the rift grows, that Stalin, disappointed by the military contribution of the western democracies to the common war against Germany and estranged by their approach to the political problems of the post-war settlement, might steer the U.S.S.R. on an independent course. He might then pay little regard to Allies whose "decisions" at Quebec are notified to Moscow with a punctilio which is a poor substitute for consultation between equals. If it be urged that disinclination to consult has been shown by Moscow itself, the answer is that the Western Allies have yet to table practical proposals on which Russian collaboration is sincerely sought.

In the strictly military field the picture, as seen by Russian eyes, is clear enough. Moscow has consistently made, and has recently reiterated with some asperity, the demand that her Allies should undertake in the mainland of Europe operations on a scale sufficient to cause the withdrawal of at least fifty of the two hundred German divisions employed on the Eastern front. If the Allies reply that their campaigns in North Africa and Sicily have not merely knocked out most of the Italian Army, but—combined with the threat of offensives against the Balkans and the Atlantic sea-board—have immobilised a very considerable (and growing) number of German divisions, which are thus indirectly diverted from Russia, the retort from Moscow is apt to be that the number of German troops actually brought to battle by these diversions is infinitesimal in comparison with the Red Army's burden. Moreover, until a major Second Front in Europe is *active*, there is no guarantee that Russian victories will not be countered—as they were last Spring—by a transfer of enemy divisions from the West. Again, if Washington and London argue that much of their resources is absorbed in maintaining command of the sea-routes against U-boat attacks, in massive air bombardment of Germany's industrial centres and in engaging the armed forces of Japan, the Russian answer is to express appreciation of these indirect contributions but to point to the total numbers of soldiers mobilised by Britain and the United States and to inquire how many are at grips with the enemy. Finally, if the Allies plead that the scale of amphibious operations is necessarily limited by the availability of specialised material equipment, the Russians ask what excuse there can be, in 1943, for such deficiencies.

In short, the U.S.S.R., whose armies' mounting victories this summer in the Ukraine have been purchased by a bitter toll of casualties, continues to harbour the suspicion (which the Quebec Conference, with its emphasis on Pacific preoccupations, will do nothing to dispel) that Britain and America hope to win the war in Europe on the cheap, and to enter the Continent as dominant conquerors only when Russia has defeated the German armies at the price of her own exhaustion.

If this were all, it would be bad enough. Unhappily, Soviet scepticism as to the sincerity and wholeheartedness of Anglo-American intentions is increased by the cumulative effect of indications that in the minds of President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill and their advisers the ideological aims of the war are changing. In the desperate days of 1940 and 1941, when there was a serious possibility that the Allies might be defeated, the single purpose, overriding all other considerations, was the destruction of aggressive Fascism—a purpose common to London, Washington and Moscow. Recently, however, with the chance of defeat to all appearances eliminated, the Russians may be forgiven if they begin to wonder whether the British and American Governments do not see as a prize of victory not merely the destruction of Fascism, but the restoration of a *status quo ante bellum* agreeable only to vested capital interests. In other words, have the governing classes in London and Washington, increasingly conscious of the logical political consequences of destroying Fascism, made up their minds that this war at any rate will not be allowed to be the locomotive of revolution, even though our friends in Europe are necessarily revolutionaries? Naturally they have not said so openly: the armies of the democracies must still be persuaded that this is a fight for the Four Freedoms and the liberation of the world from threatened enslavement. Nevertheless, the tale of equivocal Anglo-American actions in the political field is growing ominously.

First there was the deal, justified on the unconvincing excuse of "military expediency," with Darlan. Then we may list (as the Russians are undoubtedly listing) the refusal of the Western Allies to withdraw their support from the reactionary Mihailovitch; their failure (even when "military expediency" pointed in the opposite direction) to invoke the co-operation of revolutionary elements in Italy against Badoglio; their ban on the proposed visit of M. Benes to Moscow; their disinclination to accept the presence of a Soviet envoy in Algiers; their persistent appeasement of Franco (whose amity, it is now rumoured, is to cost the shipment by the Allies of armoured police cars), and, above all, their continued withholding of recognition from the Free French National Committee in North Africa. Marshal Stalin may well be forgiven if

he sees in this non-recognition, coupled with A.M.G.O.T.'s strict suppression of "political"—i.e., anti-monarchist—activities in Sicily, a significant indication that the Allies intend, in the name of law and order and preservation of pre-war institutions, to install throughout Europe east of the Oder a "non-political" administration of their own devising, or that the U.S. State Department may still even entertain hopes that the aged Pétain can don the mantle of Darlan deceased.

Can matters now be mended, can good relations with Moscow still be restored? There is little encouraging in the attitude of the United States. President Roosevelt's declaration that nations not at war with Japan had no place at Quebec was not helpful; nor is encouragement to be derived either from the resignation of Mr. Sumner Welles, or from the curious and obviously inspired article in the *New York Times* last Sunday describing the American attitude to the U.S.S.R. as one "based on principles" as opposed to British "opportunism." If the prospects of a swift ending to the war and a durable peace are not to be forfeited, it is not sufficient for the Quebec Conference's communique to refer off-handedly to the possibility some day of a tripartite discussion with Russia. It is, in our view, imperative that Mr. Churchill, as the only possible intermediary who could bridge the distance between Washington and Moscow, should himself undertake without delay a mission to discuss personally with Marshal Stalin all the points of divergence which now threaten the unity of the Allies.

Northern Awakening

Swedish firmness in dealing with Berlin over the transit cancellation has caused repercussions in Denmark, where there has been an immense increase in sabotage. The Swedes, Danes and Finns have all taken courage. Sweden has made it plain to the Finns that she can and will help them if they wish to conclude peace with Russia, and there are distinct signs in Finland that the presence of Dietl's divisions in the country is no longer to be regarded as an insuperable obstacle to negotiation. Increased German nervousness in Norway and in Denmark, which practically coincided with the Swedish cancellation, has contributed to the awakening of the Nordic consciousness. It was the Finnish radio which, quoting *Sosialidemokraatti*, explained the Danish crisis to the Americans: "The Danes are a self-controlled people, capable nevertheless of reacting violently against demands exceeding those they had accepted at the time of the occupation." Sympathy with Norway, in face of the new crisis of German ruthlessness there, has also been shown in the Finnish Press. In Denmark, the most tense situation prevails, through the stiffening of both public and Government resistance to the Germans in face of severe new German demands.

Last week the Hungarian Premier, Kallay, proclaimed Hungary's need for "peace, discipline, and a strong army at home, and the understanding of unprejudiced friends abroad." Over the week-end Hitler summoned the Hungarian Minister of Defence to his headquarters. According to Swedish newspapers, the war is becoming very unpopular in Hungary, and Hungary has become very unpopular in the Wilhelmstrasse. For a week after the fall of Mussolini, Hungarian policy wavered. Newspapers reflected the tone of the Italian press, as if trying to reshape Hungary in the political image of the Italy which, they hoped, would gain, at the hands of the Allies, an "honourable peace." The Budapest radio even conveyed "fraternal greetings from the workers of Hungary to the workers of Italy" expressed at a general meeting of the Hungarian Social Democratic party. Hungary's army lost heavily at Voronezh. That put her equal with the Rumanians, who, not entirely to Hungary's dissatisfaction, had suffered huge losses before Odessa. It had been Hitler's policy to balance Hungary against Rumania, so that neither should fear the other too greatly but both should fear Hitler. But now both Hungary and Rumania fear Russia as well. In Hungary there has been talk of declaring Budapest an "open city." This suggests that Hungary is looking fairly far ahead. That may be partly because, immediately, she has failed to satisfy both Hitler and, if the Western Powers will regard her as a pendant of Italy, the Western Powers. As regards Russia, *Pester Lloyd* argued lately that Hungary was at war with her, not because of ideological differences, but because Russia had tried to impose her own ideology upon Hungary. If Hungary is taking the longer view, it may be that she considers it will suit her to offer herself both to Russia and to a restored Czechoslovakia as a strong and friendly neighbouring Power.

Another Yugoslav Shuffle

The latest attempt to solve the almost permanent crisis of the Yugoslav Government before it departs for Cairo is as dismal and unrealistic as its predecessors. Reactionary diplomats, officers, and a former official of the secret police form the "neutral, non-political" Cabinet of M. Puritch, together with the apparently inevitable tail-gunner General Mihailovich. Like King Peter's previous Cabinets, this has been chosen from a small circle of émigrés of advanced age, obsolete vested political interests and extreme national prejudices. Most of its members are former supporters of the pre-war Yugoslav dictatorship; it is difficult to imagine a greater social rift than that which separates them from the peasants and workers of their home land. The main forces of resistance, co-operating in the Peoples' Liberation Movement, are not even accorded symbolic recognition. The new Cabinet may be called "non-political," but, like its predecessors, it will be unable to avoid the two main issues for Yugoslavs to-day. These are, first, the relations between King Peter's Government and the partisans, and secondly the Serbo-Croat national question. It must decide whether to support the underground and guerrilla movements or continue alternately to attack or ignore them. Some day soon, as liberation approaches, it must also make up its mind whether or not to give practical effect to the provisions of the Serbo-Croat Agreement and re-establish the broken relations with the Ban of Croatia, Shubaschich. If the new Government under the cloak of political neutrality and expediency leaves these questions unsolved it will in practice merely perpetuate the reactionary policy of former pan-Serbian governments. If the fall of this Cabinet, too, at some early date is not followed by a radical change in ruling personalities, it is likely that the hostility with which its nominal subjects would greet its liberating mission would set very considerable problems for Allied diplomacy.

"The Verdict of the People"

The Australian elections have resulted in a sweeping victory for Labour. Mr. Curtin has not only won a large majority in the lower House, but, for the first time, has also given his Party control of the Elective Senate. Even the optimists had not expected the Menzies-Hughes-Fadden triumvirate of big business and conservative farmers to be so decisively defeated. In spite of a most bitter campaign, in which the opposition relied largely upon confused political and personal issues, the Australian people have recognised that the Country Party and the United Australia Party offered no real alternative to a Labour Government. Ever since the Japanese reached New Guinea and the Solomons, the prestige of the Curtin Government has been rising. It has had to face serious military dangers and at the same time reorganise its domestic economy. That the Allies are now driving the Japanese back in New Guinea, rather than Queensland, is generally held as a measure of the success of the Curtin defence policy. But the election must be regarded as much as a mandate for the future as an expression of confidence in Labour's capacity to win the war. Dr. Evatt, for one, has expressed concern about the post-war position of his country, and that uneasiness has not been confined to official circles. During the war there has been no hesitation in appealing directly to the U.S.A. for assistance. It seems certain that Mr. Curtin, his majority safe for four years, will not wish to continue playing a subordinate role in shaping the strategy of peace. Nor will he seek approval for the pattern of his reconstruction and social security schemes in Lombard or Threadneedle Street. He rightly did not choose to fight his election on a Socialist platform. His opponents, who conducted the campaign on a basis of personal vilification, bitterly attacked him for introducing Socialist measures necessary for war efficiency. Now when Mr. Fadden himself admits that Labour's victory is indeed "the verdict of the people," Mr. Curtin may fairly judge that he has a mandate for an extension of Socialism into the post-war world. Labour is both in office and in power now; its actions will have an important effect on the future of other democracies. British Labour may not yet feel the wind, but it can watch the straws in Canada and Australia.

School Fees

The Fleming Committee on the Public Schools has just published a special interim report on tuition fees in secondary schools. The Committee proved to be divided on this issue; the Majority favours abolition; the Minority, which included the Chairman, dissents, with special emphasis on what are called Direct Grant Schools. Both sections accept the principle that lack of money must not be a bar to any child receiving the education to which it is best suited. It is understood that the Modern Schools, which Mr. Butler desires, will be free. But the type of school with which this report is chiefly concerned is the Direct Grant School—a class which includes many of the older Grammar Schools. These schools receive part of their income from fees and part direct from the Board of Education. They are regarded as having more prestige and a higher educational character than can be immediately expected of the new Modern Schools. It is therefore thought that parents, who are able to afford the school of their choice, will not easily agree to their children being directed to a school which they consider socially inferior or with a curriculum that they consider unsuited to their own child. The logical conclusion of the Minority argument is that it is unfair to the more wealthy parents if their wealth is not allowed to give their children an advantage. The more able poor can always be compensated by special places.

A Practical Proposal

The Social Security League was founded some five months ago to prevent the Beveridge Plan from becoming one of those noble, lost causes whose ghosts haunt the vaults of British history. As a principle social security has the assent of all political parties; it has seized popular imagination and is the topic of countless discussion groups within the Forces and among civilians. But since the first flush of enthusiasm for the Plan there have been powerful interests at work, undermining here, erecting barriers there and always relying on the shortness of public memory and the Treasury's tendency to find, when the time comes, that the requisite money is not available. The Social Security League sets out to counteract this silent opposition by educating public opinion about the actual proposals of the Report. We need the sort of popular campaign that was once organised by Cobden and Bright. But to launch on this adventure the Social Security League, a non-party organisation, needs innumerable funds to extend its work. Five thousand pounds are wanted within the next few weeks. The sum should not be difficult to raise. If a thousand readers of this journal would each send a donation of five guineas that would more than suffice to launch the campaign. All sums, large or small, or even membership subscriptions of only five shillings (a pound entitles the member to all the literature of the League) will be welcomed by the Treasurer of the Social Security League, 51 Tothill Street, London, S.W.1.

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LABOUR AND THE OLD SOCIAL ORDER

In 1940, when our peril was greatest, the commercial Tories gave place to the traditional gentlemen of England, and the leaders of Labour joined the Government so that national unity should be complete. These Labour leaders became efficient members of the Government, though they ceased in any effective way to be leaders of Labour. An exception should be made for Mr. Bevin, who procured a far better deal for trade unionists than a Conservative Minister of Labour and National Service would have done. At the Home Office Mr. Morrison once again proved a first-class administrator, but he had no chance, until his recent speeches, of making a political contribution that would distinguish him from any other energetic Minister of any Party. Everyone thinks of Dr. Dalton as a thoroughly capable departmental chief, while Mr. A. V. Alexander stands in the public mind as a buddy of Admirals, a small and endearing edition of Mr. Winston Churchill in naval uniform. Good fellows all of them, but not very significant as a political group. Indeed, the Labour Ministers never worked together to procure social changes in the way that the Tories worked together to prevent them. The Tories, of course, were quite clever. They pushed some of the less popular jobs on to Labour and even persuaded Herbert Morrison to make the Government's apologies for emasculating Beveridge, with the unfortunate result that the man who fought best for the Report behind the scenes is associated in the public mind with scotching the hopes of the most popular legislative proposal of our generation. To-day, with the prospect of victory more close and more certain, reactionaries who were too discredited to raise their heads in 1940 and 1941, are everywhere digging themselves in and whetting their knives for the post-war struggle.

Lift up a stone in any department of public life and you will discover how well the technique of indirect control is at work. In the B.B.C., for instance, there is no obvious change of policy. J. B. Priestley is still (under protest) allowed a few Talks by way of demonstrating our national partiality for free discussion, but anonymous "experts" on each important topic, with no defined status, are now ensconced in Broadcasting House with a view to seeing that nothing which does not please the 1922 Committee is said, whilst there is constant pressure against the use of anyone whose opinions are more advanced than, shall we say, those of Sir Archibald Sinclair. No scandal occurs from which a public issue might arise; there is to be no focus of controversy. A partial exception must be made for the row over the Catering Bill, which was the first proof that the old propertied interests remained unchanged, while the struggle over the Trades Disputes Act shows how unwilling the Conservative Party is to make any genuine concessions. The final stage when the 1922 Committee will be glad to see Labour dropped from the Government altogether has not yet been reached. The association with Labour still has its uses. It was needed to save the country in 1940. To-day its use is to cover the change from a war that had a social content and a clear meaning for the ordinary man into a war for preserving the *status quo* and making the Peace all that Labour declared it should not be and that Conservatives have always meant that it should be.

We discuss elsewhere the biggest issue of all—co-operation between Britain and U.S.A. with Russia and with the resurgent groups on the Continent who have during long and cruel years of struggle been maintaining the fight for freedom. On this main issue of strategy and foreign policy it may be held that Labour Ministers have been trapped and powerless. Perhaps they have scarcely more to say in the strategy of the war than critics outside the Government. But to-day, unless they are much more blind than we believe them to be, they must see that the Allies are rapidly drifting apart and that the war may easily become a war for Anglo-American domination and the Old Order on the one side and, on the other, a war in which the Soviet Union plays a lone hand against Western Capitalism. The result, if this tendency continues, is sufficiently obvious and sufficiently dangerous to make any responsible leader of Labour ask himself how long it is possible for him to be associated with a Government the effects of whose long-term policy must be to divide the country and make us hesitant leaders of reaction instead of the liberators we proclaim ourselves to be.

This picture of the growing split in foreign politics is underlined by events on the home front. Already Labour Ministers are tainted by hesitations which a large part of the electorate will regard as betrayal. Nothing has been said, still less done, to show that the Government seriously intend any of the changes that are necessary if we are not, after the war, to turn into a British imitation of a Corporate State with no clear policy to prevent unemployment or to plan England on a basis of public advantage. The Scott and the Uthwatt Reports appear to be forgotten, the Beveridge plan is perhaps in reserve as a reform which, if partly adopted, can give a kudos to the Conservative Party at the next election, but which will never be fully adopted because its application would involve an important shift in the balance of economic power in this country. None of the sailors or soldiers or airmen, who to our knowledge spend a considerable portion of their spare moments in making cynical comments on the politicians at home and on their own economic prospects for the future, can feel any confidence that at home there is a strong political party of capable men determined to make good their post-war aspirations. Without Opposition leadership, without even as much hope in a party as the rank and file felt for the young and untested Labour Party in the last war, there is no focus for progressive opinion, and real danger that discontent within the Forces will grow sour and give an opportunity to irresponsible seekers after power. Newspapers may tell the truth, as far as they know it; politicians, ranging from the extreme Left through Commonwealth up to independent Labour spokesmen, may perorate throughout the country, but out of all this nothing will come unless there is in the House of Commons a possible alternative Prime Minister or a possible alternative Government. It does not matter if the alternative Premier looks to-day very insignificant against the majesty of Mr. Churchill's immense and deserved prestige. The time will come when the country will look for an Opposition leader with a united party behind him, even though it is a small party; if it is there, the electorate will see in it the nucleus of a future Government. Then there will be a focus for criticism and a focus for construction and for hope. We might have to wait ten years (it would not be surprising after a great war) for reactionaries to give way to broader architects of social progress. That would be bad. But the peculiar tragedy of England to-day, faced with this broad division of international and national policy, is that in the shadow of Mr. Churchill's greatness, the "same hard-faced business men who did well out of the last war" and who have maintained their hold on the keys of power in this war, are steadily digging themselves in, ready for the moment when on an issue of their choosing they can discard their Labour colleagues and continue the process of misgoverning the country which they contrived so successfully to do between 1918 and 1940. But it is still possible for Labour to create an opportunity for itself and claim its title-deeds of leadership.

THROUGH VICTORY TO PEACE

The road to victory unfolds itself slowly, but with a massive power which none of us can mistake. The personal rule of Mussolini is broken for ever. No one can read either the feverish articles of Goebbels or consider the significance of Himmler's appointment as Minister of the Interior without the sense that each leader of the Nazi forces begins to look with anxiety at his neighbour; the end of dictatorship is almost always a kind of skin game in which each of the players yearns for the chance to play the rôle of Darlan or of Badoglio. And, all over the world, countries which have known, like Austria for over five years, like Czecho-Slovakia for almost that period, like Poland since September, 1939, and almost all the rest of Europe since the summer of 1940, the tiger-grip of Nazism, begin to see hope and life where, for so long, there has been nothing but the relentless vista of fear and death.

The road to victory unfolds itself. It is time that we began to inquire whether victory is to be the prelude to peace. And it is exactly as that question is posed that doubts begin to assail one's mind. "Either the Germans must be exterminated to the last man," wrote Madame Curie in 1918, "or else they must be given a peace which they can endure." What she said so wisely of the Germans at the end of the first world war is true of the whole of civilisation as we enter upon the last phase of the second. Mankind must be given a peace which it can endure. Unless we think of victory in those terms, the battle we are waging leads not to peace, but to surrender, which is a wholly different thing. For our enemies may be beaten in the field; our task is the far more important one of breaking those forces which enabled them to become the masters of the nations they led into war or conquered with so grim a ferocity. The "unconditional surrender" of Badoglio would not mean peace if it meant that he could, with our assent, prevent the resurgence of Italian democracy. The "unconditional surrender" of Hitler would not, either, mean peace unless it meant the final and decisive destruction of the interests he has symbolised. And this is true of all his satellites, Horthy in Hungary, Franco in Spain, Antonescu in Rumania and the rest. We need a peace in Europe which the common peoples of Europe can endure. In the widest sense, this time, it means a peace which "makes the world safe for democracy," safe, not as a form of political constitution merely, but safe also on the planes of social and economic life.

It is not easy for the ordinary citizen to see that the governments either of Britain or of the United States approach the matter from this angle. With all the rhetoric, much of it noble rhetoric, we have had from their statesmen, it is not yet possible to conclude that they have thought beyond victory to peace; it is not always easy to be certain that all of them want to think in this way. Their relations to a reviving France have not, as yet, been marked, in any of their phases, by a clear insistence that the French people must be fully master in its own house; there are curious, even sinister, figures to whom both the British Foreign Office and the American State Department have, amongst others, lent their ardent patronage. Anyone can see in defeated Italy the stage which historically precedes a popular revolution; not only is there no encouragement from Washington or Whitehall to its outbreak, but the homage officially tendered by General Eisenhower to the services of the House of Savoy in the overthrow of Mussolini's personal rule makes one suspicious that, were it to break out, and to insist that, in a free and democratic Italy, the House of Savoy can have no place, there would be alarm and despondency in Downing Street, and perhaps in the White House also. And not one word has come to make General Franco understand that the Spain which, with the aid of the Axis Powers, he transformed from an interesting experiment in democracy into a vast prison house, is nearing its close; on the contrary, we are asked to feel satisfaction at the skill with which Sir Samuel Hoare has evaded Falangist Spain's displeasure, and at the magnanimity with which American diplomacy has

dangled the bait of a heavy post-war tourist traffic before its eyes to depress the temperature of German influence. Nor do we say forthrightly that a civilised Europe cannot tolerate, after the war, a Hungary in which a small number of feudal landlords left over from the Middle Ages live on the grim toil of rent-racked peasants who are still half-serfs, or on an urban working-class which is kept down by all the normal methods of a Fascist terror to a proper recognition that hope is a rationed commodity in a dictatorship. It is even said that the British Foreign Office prohibits wireless criticism of the Hungarian rulers; they hunt and shoot in the manner that is typical of the gentlemen of England. We must, no doubt, do all we can to safeguard the future of that threatened category.

But what, as the pattern begins to be woven is, I think, disturbing above all is the clear evidence that on matters of essential principle in the post-war period, whatever be the situation while we still batter at the enemy's escape, there is no clear agreement between Great Britain and the United States, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union, on the other. We shall all stand together in resolute alliance until the victory has been won; we have no knowledge that there is a common purpose in the victory beyond the defeat of the enemy. We have gossip and to spare about the future attitude of the Soviet Union. The quidnuncs tell us of its profound nationalism, as though a people united in war against an aggressor ever displayed a different temper. Or they tell us that Marshal Stalin is no longer interested in the victory of the proletarian revolution; power, we are to suppose, has led him to abandon the Marxist principles he has sought to preach for forty years. Or they whisper that the Russian losses are so immense that there is no reason to expect, much less to fear, its patronage of the revolutionary idea; all its energies, we are to suppose, will be concentrated on a reconstruction of Russia which may be envisaged in isolation from the fate of the rest of Europe. The fact remains that no one dare ignore the Russian view of peace, not least because the Russian achievement in this war has done more to domesticate the central principle of the Russian Revolution in the hearts of untold millions among the masses of the whole world, than any other idea to which the cause of the United Nations has given birth. Yet there has been no effort, as yet, either in London or in Washington, to find common terms which give that central principle a status in the event which corresponds to its immense emotional power. That is important simply because, though the joint effort of America and Britain may well prove decisive in the attainment of victory, without the full co-operation of the Soviet Union, after Hitler's overthrow, that joint effort alone is incapable of promising a peace which European civilisation can endure.

It is, moreover, difficult not to be disturbed by two other things. First, it is increasingly obvious that the price Mr. Roosevelt is paying for the collaboration of big business in the war effort is the jettisoning, stage by stage, of much that was most significant in the New Deal. Victorious America seems not unlikely to emerge as an America more akin in philosophic purpose to the ideals of Mr. Hoover than to the ideals which Mr. Roosevelt outlined in his famous plea to Congress for the Four Freedoms. Mr. Wallace's "century of the common man" may turn out, in the event, to be a streamlined version of the common man who looks to the American Chamber of Commerce for the ideology behind which he puts his power. And to this must be added that Mr. Churchill's original insistence that he is fighting to preserve "traditional Britain" seems to become every day more true. However fertile in inquiry and promise, nothing in the policies of his government has altered, or even sought to alter, the fundamental disposition of economic power in Britain. The Beveridge Report, the Uthwatt Report, the White Paper on education, to take examples only, are to wait for action, it appears, until it has become clear that the "financial position," which has, historically, always been a Treasury euphemism for the claims on the national income of the governing class, can afford to contemplate experiments of this order. Privilege was not without humility in the epoch of the Battle of Britain; but, since the successful invasion of North Africa, it has begun to recover its self-confidence by leaps and bounds. What asset, after all, can its critics mobilise in a general election comparable to the gratitude we all feel to Mr. Churchill for his courage and tenacity? Mr. Churchill, in a famous broadcast, made it crystal-clear that he did not underestimate the collateral that asset was worth in the elector's esteem.

The period when a decisive victory is in process of organisation is always one in which the temptation to silence is very great. In 1918 Mr. Clynes and Mr. Walsh urged on the Labour Party the folly of leaving the ship as it moved into the dock. In fact, there is no time when it is more urgent for the masses to make their voices heard if they desire consideration in that hour when victory may either mean a peace they can endure or the foundations of another conflict. That is, in fact, the issue before the masses in Europe to-day. If they are silent, it will be assumed that they consent to all the twists and turns of the tortuous diplomacy we are witnessing. They ought to make it clear that they understand at least two minor and one major matter. They ought to make it clear that Amgot is not, in their judgment, the prelude to a peace they would endure, as compared, in Italy, for instance, with terms made with the men who have for twenty years endured poverty and exile rather than compromise, like Victor Emmanuel and Badoglio, with the loathsome habits of Fascism; and they ought to make it clear that the foundations of a new social order must have at least their beginning before inertia and fatigue reduce the ordinary man to the position of a private citizen who assumes that politics are the concern of politicians only. And they ought to insist that, in the use of victory, we develop categories of action in which the central principle of the Russian Revolution—planned production for community consumption—is given its full place. For unless we do this, while there is time, we shall miss one of the supreme opportunities of modern history. This is the one real road to an economics of abundance; and that is the only basis upon which we can build a peace the peoples of Europe will find they can endure.

HAROLD J. LASKI

A LONDON DIARY

THE row about the Post Office Workers' application for affiliation to the T.U.C. has now reached this point. The Post Office Workers have only withdrawn in order that the four Civil Service unions may jointly demand a change in the 1927 Act to enable them to affiliate. They realise now that they were smartly out-manœuvred by Mr. Churchill when he arranged for their leaders to have a joint meeting with the Conservative Party chiefs. In that way Mr. Churchill put the responsibility off his own shoulders and made the unions' demand in effect "controversial" within the terms of the Labour-Conservative truce. I do not gather that this will deter Sir Walter Citrine or the spokesmen of the Civil Service unions who are indignant about the Treasury Circular which warned individual members of the unions that they would lose their pension and establishment rights if their organisations insisted on illegal affiliation. The threat, which was no doubt legally justified, seemed to them the more serious since some forty thousand civil servants now in the Forces might find themselves dismissed on their return to civil life.

* * *

A further result of the controversy has been to increase the feeling between the trade unions and the Labour Party leaders in the Government. That the situation is serious is obvious to everyone, since it has involved a special meeting of the National Council of Labour and the three Executives. It was noted by many people that at the meeting on the day when Sir Walter Citrine discussed the issue with the Parliamentary Labour Party and the National Executive, the Labour Cabinet Ministers were not present—a strange absence in view of their responsibility for the Cabinet decision to turn down the T.U.C. demand. I fancy that Sir Walter Citrine, who has not lately minced his words when speaking of Mr. Attlee's leadership, will have some strong remarks to make on the subject when the T.U.C. meets next week at Southport. The clear way of avoiding a crisis would be a conciliatory attitude on the part of Mr. Churchill, if he is back in time to interview the leaders of the four unions before the T.U.C. meets. Unless this happens I cannot see how the question of Labour participation in the government can be avoided at the T.U. conference. But I hope someone will have the sense to point out that the issue of Civil Service unions' affiliation to the T.U.C. is not a good one on which to split the National Government. If Mr. Churchill, and indeed most of us, after three years of this controversy have only just become aware of the difference between affiliation to the T.U.C. and to the Labour Party, then it is obvious that the issue is much too complicated and technical to make the sort of national appeal required for so important a decision.

* * *

Ever since the German attack on Russia, two broad concepts of the war have been at issue. Controversy has mainly turned on a Second Front. In some ways this has been a misfortune, for it is a technical and military issue as well as a political one. Whenever journals or politicians have emphasised the Soviet demand for a second front, they have been told of technical and secret objections to any change in the long-distance conceptions of the war planned by Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill. No one but the General Staff itself could pass a final judgment. A "second front" cannot be improvised—at least not more improvised than the successful attack which Foch made on the Germans in 1918 in spite of the experts who wanted to wait until the long-planned offensive of 1919. It takes, in any case, months to plan a Continental offensive and at any particular moment it is therefore possible to reply to those who want to synchronise a Western attack with Russia's offensive that there is one or other serious shortage of transport or material. When we then ask why these preparations were not decided upon six months ago, we are met with the assurance that in any case the necessary plans are now fully in hand. The same series of unanswerable arguments are advanced again when six months later the demand comes from our Russian Allies and is again shown to be impracticable. So it happens that the Soviet demand for the diversion of a certain number of German divisions to another front is always impracticable. Further, Moscow's propaganda is always unfair and ignores much that is being done by Britain and America. But always in the background there is the political fact that in the Democracies a long war has been planned, always on the basis of an underestimate of Soviet Russian capacity. I thought Alec Werth's broadcast account of what giving the Germans time to retreat slowly means in terms of death and destruction a sufficiently convincing explanation of the Soviet attitude.

* * *

A cart in a field (I am quoting from the account of a friend on the spot) carries a small speaker's platform; a speaker at the platform. Three or four stalwarts are grouped round the cart; they are carrying a standard from which floats a red flag. What is the speaker saying? He is putting the basic case for Socialism and being briskly heckled by a fair-sized crowd. Are we back in the 'nineties? We rub our eyes and look again. No! We are in a field at Dartington listening to members of the Fabian Summer School Speakers' Class going through their oratorical paces, with

the rest of the Summer School to heckle. The scene typifies the spirit of the School. After twenty years or so of doldrums the Fabian Society is experiencing the throes of revival. Members join, money flows in—collections for this fund or that were a twice-daily feature of the School—new branches spring up. This year, in a very full School, the age average seemed to me to have gone down, always a good sign that a society's fortunes are going up. This is a sense of new opportunity; as Jim Griffiths, the most mellifluously benevolent of directors pointed out, we missed one after the last war, and in retrospect we can see that we haven't had another since. But, so optimists say, the end of this war will present us with another, the opportunity to start on the making of a Socialist England, and this time we must be ready. Meanwhile John Parker asked, why not insist, through the Labour Party, on the appointment of T.U. representatives and Labour Party observers in every freshly liberated country, just to see that things don't go wrong at the beginning. But can we seize the opportunity unless we ourselves are changed? Can Socialism, in fact, ever again take the place of religion? The revival of this earliest and most fundamental controversy is significant of our period, and it is important to record that it was probably the most keenly debated issue at the School; it was the same issue that was raised some months ago in the *N.S. & N.* by a letter to this journal from the Rector of Dartington. Joad threw down the Rector's bone; the Rector himself trimmed and polished it, and the School gnawed and mumbled it for the rest of the week. The Church, they said, was awful. God! how awful it was. Religion? They weren't so sure. The Church had made such a mess of it that they didn't really know what it was. But meanwhile, what about a spot of Socialism to go on with?

* * *

The Lakes, where I have just spent a week cycling and walking, are no place for holiday-makers. "You won't bring me here again," said a lady to her escort the other day by Coniston Water. "There isn't even a band." Sad, of course, to think that this lady must, at least for the duration, go to Blackpool for recreation. No crowds, no banjo parties, no hawkers of postcards or steamer-trips on the Lakes. There are other objections too, to the Lake District. I sympathised sincerely with a man and a girl (they were riding tandem) who told me a sad story of a mean landlady and added: "It takes a lot of scenery to make up for a bad dinner." And so I found on the mountains only a few walkers who were there because they like the things that belong to the Lakes—curlews the springy turf between bog and rock, the view that makes you catch your breath as the cloud clears from the crags across the valley, the immense exhilaration of reaching the top and the joy of discovering that you can walk on from one height to another and not feel weary. For the duration at least this will remain a paradise of quiet roads and lonely hill-tops. Motors pass rarely and it is not often that the sound of aircraft high up reminds you that there is now no technical reason why helicopters should not find a landing-ground anywhere but on the roughest screes and the highest peaks.

* * *

The following story reached me from an unimpeachable source:

A brass-hat in a first-class carriage, which also held a young man in civilian clothes, made a point of speaking somewhat more loudly than was necessary to his neighbour about young men who ought to be in uniform. The young man bore this in silence until the train was drawing in. Whereupon he spoke these parting words. "I have heard, Sir, what you were saying. Let me tell you, Sir, that I am in a reserved occupation. Let me add, Sir, that the establishment which employs me is the Foreign Office. And let me further add, Sir, that if it hadn't been for the Foreign Office, you would never have had your bloody war."

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to William Clark.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Mrs. Hilda Milnes, Wood Kirk, Batley, Yorkshire, was fined £1 with £1 11*s.* 6*d.* costs at Batley to-day, for wasting milk by washing her doorstep with it.

Mr. F. N. McLaren (prosecuting) said that a constable, off duty, saw Mrs. Milnes pouring white liquid from a bottle on her doorstep.

When he asked what the liquid was, she replied: "It is the first time I have used fresh milk. I have always used sour milk before."

Mrs. Milnes fainted in court.—Report in *Evening Standard*.

Two men appeared at Liverpool on Saturday charged with shopbreaking; one of the men, stated the prosecution, said to the constable who arrested them, "I came to help my mate out. He is being summoned for not paying his income-tax." The other man was alleged to have stated: "That's right. I have got 10 days to pay my income-tax, and he came to give me a hand to get the money."—From the *Times*.

"A man bought nine bread rolls at a restaurant and because the waitress would not toast and butter them all he abused her and threw two rolls down the service hatch," said the Mayor of Edmonton at a Food Committee meeting.

The chairman said the man had been warned. "He ought to be prosecuted," said the Mayor.—*Evening News*.

THE TWO WARS

The Russian war is faster
The Allied war is later,
Its execution vaster,
And its implications greater,
The Russian war is mobile
With a limited objective
The Allied war is global,
Fitted in a world-perspective.

The Soviet offensive
Is expressed in operations,
The Allied, more extensive
Halts its march for conversations;
Their talks are periodic,
Their strategy is serial,
Their action episodic,
Their outlook is Imperial.

The Russians force decisions,
The Allies plan dispersal,
Postponing armed collisions
For a climax universal
The Red strokes are incessant,
Confined to one Locality
The Allies plan at present
For ultimate finality.

The Russian war is stiffer,
Its tempo is torrential,
The Reds and Allies differ
On the share of war potential:
The Allies work in unity
On courses contradictory
The Reds ask opportunity
To stage an instant victory.

The Russian war is urgent
The Allied goal is distant,
With purposes divergent
Two wars are co-existent.
The Allies find admissible
A strategy one-sided—
Peace may be indivisible
But War can be divided.

SAGITTARIUS

FINLAND AT THE STRAITS

The news from Finland leaves no doubt but that the Finnish people wants to pull out of the war. Radio Lahti has stated officially that thirty-three representative citizens handed President Ryti a memorandum last week-end urging that the possibility of obtaining peace should be investigated, and stressing the need for friendship with the U.S.A. The citizens represent all parties in the state, except Conservative and Fascist.

It is neither because of any immediate food scarcity, nor because of any sudden reverses of their own in the field, that the Finns want to pull out. They want to pull out purely and simply because they know that their "ally of expediency," Germany, can no longer beat Russia, and that war against Russia is indivisible, although a great many Finns, in particular those of the Right, would like to divide the peace to follow it. If there is vacillation still, it is because of the hope that differences take shape there between Russia and the Democracies.

The Swedes, however, are telling the Finns that, if they wish to make a move, they had better make it at once, or blame no one but themselves. And that if they do make a move Sweden, in the interests of Northern liberty and unity, will if necessary take the risks which are proper in order to help her. The Swedish army is holding its biggest manoeuvres, and air "battles" are being fought over Stockholm each morning at 4 a.m. Finnish newspapers have praised Sweden for the stand she has made for Nordic independence in cancelling the German transit rights, seriously though they affect the position of Dietl's seven divisions in and near Lapland.

The Finnish diet is to meet at the beginning of next month and is expected to debate foreign policy. And as Russia will give no indication as to what her intentions are towards Finland in the post-war settlement, it is expected that the debate will cover a very wide range. For some time past the press, though heavily censored in its treatment of foreign policy, has been discussing the Atlantic Charter, particularly from the point of view of the latitude with which Moscow could interpret it. And the diet will face the fact that, during the last quarter of a century, Finland's position in the world has been made vastly different by the rise of her traditional enemy to first rank amongst the powers—not despite but by virtue of the triumph of political and philosophic principles previously "foreign" to Russia herself, yet having no cradle in any particular country nor in its nationalism.

The greatest crisis in Finland's history took place during another philosophic revolution. It was the crisis of her birth as a modern nation. Finland is the youngest adherent to Christendom, to which she was converted by the Swedish sword when America had already been discovered. Copernicus at that time had disproved geocentricity, and mankind, agreeing henceforth to revolve quietly around the sun as well as around Earth's axis, was becoming more thoughtful and more modest. The world had hardly recovered from the shock of learning that it was round when these things happened, and it was in that crisis of universal conceptions that Finland began her life as a modern or "western" nation, at first under Swedish tutelage. The Swedes gave her an alphabet. It is to that period that the Finns trace their traditions. The Russian frontier, for them, is not only a frontier between Finland and Russia; they expect the world to regard it as a frontier, under the Northern Lights, between light and darkness, between West and East.

In the meaner sense the new nation did well out of the rearrangement of the universe which resulted from accepting the discoveries of Copernicus. Living as near as was humanly possible to the North Pole, they were left without doubts that it was around themselves that Earth, at any rate, continued to revolve. To that consolation

they cling tenaciously still, like widows to their pensions. The force of their friendship is felt centrifugally, in longitudes perforce as well as in latitudes, though they make exception of their Estonian kinsmen. It is good to be British, American, or Japanese, and the fellow playing the tom-tom in Africa is also a friend of Finland. It is less good to be Swedish, rather bad to be German. It is diabolism to be Russian, and that at all times is the main thing.

Ask a Russian whether he is an easterner or a westerner, and he will probably say "Nichevo." He may say, "How narrow you are!" or "It depends where you begin." The discussion may proceed to Einstein. The Finn has no such doubts. He came from the Russian steppes two thousand years ago, and is western. The Russian is eastern. The Finn does not ask, "Are we going forwards or are we going backwards?" He asks "Are we going eastwards or are we going westwards?" And that is the test he applies to this war and to all plans for the peace to follow it. He would not fear to offend the heathen Mikado if he could have the sun "rising" in the west and "setting" in the east.

The last war, from the point of view of the Finn, was a good war. Germany defeated Russia. The Western powers defeated Germany. Germany helped the Finns, after the Bolshevik revolution, to establish their separation from Russia. The Allies saved Finland from having to accept a German prince, and enabled her to establish complete independence, as a republic.

In 1918 the Finns were grateful to the Germans until they knew that their help was at a price. The German general, von der Goltz, interfered with Finnish internal affairs, and it was he who proposed, with the German victory, the German prince. A man of vulgar philosophy, and no respecter of small nations, he believed that "He who pays the piper calls the tune." Mannerheim, *grand seigneur* and ex-Russian general, quarrelled with him and resigned command of the Finnish army. Already in his early fifties, he had learnt the wisdom of Machiavelli's warning against alliances with more powerful states.

This year the old marshal, nearing eighty, learnt that wisdom again. This time he did not resign the command, but ill-health took him recently to the border of Machiavelli's land. On his journey to Switzerland he went to pains to avoid meeting German generals. And it was noteworthy that neither he nor President Ryti attended Hitler's spring gathering of satellites, but that the Foreign Minister, Herra Henrik Ramsay, was sent quietly to see Ribbentrop instead. Little publicity was given to this interview. But it became known that Herra Ramsay, a forthright man, had told Ribbentrop that Washington had offered to mediate with Moscow for a separate peace for Finland on a basis including the partial restoration of her 1939 frontiers. Ribbentrop flew into a rage. Had not Germany offered Finland widerflung frontiers, to include Russian Karelia and perhaps part of Norway, together with Northern leadership in the New Order? And had not the leaders of Finland agreed to those terms? Whether for that reason or for another, the American Legation at Helsinki packed up and went to Stockholm. Mr. Cordell Hull explained it as an "administrative measure," which may have meant that Germany had threatened Finland with an occupation, such as that of Denmark. A *chargé d'affaires* had been left behind, but later he was withdrawn as well. So slender now is the thread which holds Finland to the United States, without whose friendship nearly all traditionally minded Finns can conceive of no future.

There are still some older men in Finland, such as Paasikivi, who speak Russian and understand the Russians well. Mannerheim, too, the last survivor of Nicholas II's generals, accords good points to the Russians, with whom he disagrees nowadays largely because he is not a Communist. For some time nobody has known where Paasikivi is, and that may be a hopeful sign.

Hopeful, because the fragile Finnish barque is at the straits, swept by a rising gale which has turned against it. It must somehow seek haven on the one side or on the other, or must sail through the straits into an unknown sea in which, it would have the world know, lives a monster. This may be so much imagination, and indeed so much hysteria, but, asks the Finn, "Have we not proof of the existence of this monster? Did it not speak only recently? Did it not offer to disappear?" Once it was called Peter the Great. It changed sex several times. Yesterday it was called Comintern.

Stalin, for whom Paasikivi admitted to me a personal liking, could have been addressing Finland indirectly the other week when he replied to the *Times* Moscow correspondent on the future of Poland. And Moscow, it is known, had already made it as clear as is possible behind the diplomatic scenes that Russia has no quarrel with Finland, and would consent to her having back the industrial areas taken from her in 1940. To transpose, did not Moscow propose in effect "an independent *Finland*, good neighbourly relations, mutual respect, and, should the *Finnish* people so desire, an alliance?"

There are those in the diet who understand that Moscow could want in fact fluid neighbourly relations in a world which has its centre neither in Washington nor in Moscow. Their voices are few, but there is a large opinion, notably Social Democratic, which would be glad if Finland could get out of the war with American guarantees.

The Americans, however, have made it plain to the Finns that they will have to negotiate directly with Russia. And it was precisely of that American statement that Mr. Arthur Deakin reminded the Finnish T.U.C. chief, Herra Eero Vuori, last week-end in Stockholm, when he asked whether Britain would mediate. Mr. Deakin also advised that the earliest approach to Mme. Kollontay, the Russian minister in Stockholm, would be the best way of obtaining confidence and reasonable terms.

Finland's closest foreign relations are now with Sweden. It is of importance that Russia wants, too, to maintain friendly relations with Sweden, which means that, if friendship really has to be bargained for, a joint Fenno-Swedish bargaining position would not be too bad. In fact, it should be very good. It has recently been revealed in the Swedish newspaper *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts- Tidningen* that Russia went so far in April, 1940, as to tell Hitler that if he attacked Sweden he would be attacked by Russia.

There are about as many German troops in Finland as there are Finns under arms. If Finland can still avail herself of her last chance of disentanglement by bargain, it will be of interest that nearly all the German troops are well north of the "waist-line," and that the Finns hold the south with its better communications. Earlier this year the Germans threatened to sell Finland down the river by pretending that they could, if they wished, conclude a separate peace with Russia at any time. The position is now that the Finns, by concluding their own separate peace with Russia, could sell Dietl still farther down the river. Hitler has helped to make that position possible by agreeing to Swedish demands for the cancellation of the transit agreement. Hitler's weakness over that deal is one factor among those which have caused the Finns to lose confidence in him.

ERIC DANCY

PUBLIC DESIGN AND PRIVATE TASTE

THERE is a sharp distinction between Public Opinion and Private Attitude: on the one hand the manifest, respectable veneer of people's talk, on the other the deeper and often much more reticent attitude, only forthcoming in certain circumstances. To-day's Private Attitude, easily overlooked in polyvocal democracy, makes the Public Opinion of to-morrow. Private Attitude may only emerge to the surface as openly expressed Public Opinion when it is socially *respectable*. It may be made socially acceptable in a number of ways. One Royalty, seven bishops, a million ordinary people, will make a thing respectable. It can be sanctioned by great external events, or by convention, the historical habit.

The man-made objects around us are an expression of Public Opinion. These are designs which are publicly accepted, and publicly liked. It does not follow they are the designs which are *privately* most liked, or the only ones which *can* be publicly liked in the future. Public Design goes in for Landseer long before Lautrec. Therefore Private Taste is thought to have the same preference. In a Northern town, famous for its ugliness, Mass-Observation showed a series of pictures to ordinary citizens. Conditions were carefully controlled, and the pictures were as nearly as possible uniform in size, colour, etc. Nor did the names of the artists appear, so that there could be no question of the subject picking out work by a known name. Under these conditions Picasso evoked the strongest reaction. A few were bored, many delighted, nearly all positively interested in "modernistic" work. More academic stuff aroused more negative interest. Yet one can hardly imagine a spinner, or the mayor, displaying even a Nash on his living-room wall. A stag surrounded by a dozen hounds is far more probable. The walls of Britain are plastered with the mediocre, indifferent and intellectually dead. The great majority decorate their homes with what is easily available, frequent, familiar, and thus considered "normal" by neighbours—in short, with what will lead the Insurance Man to regard the family as one which may safely be allowed a fortnight's credit.

In the film world it was generally assumed that the public wanted only escape from life's realities. Many films dealt with the woolly West—or some wild West End—the woolier, the better. There was little else to see. Exploration showed that although people had been lapping up their escapism with fervour, they were ready to be more serious. It was said that Bernard Shaw's plays could never make popular cinema. *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion* killed such rubbish. Walt Disney's *Fantasia* was an appeal to tastes which, it had always been assumed, were practically lacking in the masses, who welcomed *Fantasia*. All Disney's films ought, by Wardour Street precepts, to have been damned in the public eye. Lately the increasing flow of intelligent films proves the error of previous diagnosis. Orson Welles, Duvivier, "Modern Times," "In Which We Serve," "Quiet Wedding," "H. H. Pulham, Esq.," "Our Town," "The Grapes of Wrath," "How Green was my Valley," demonstrate the potentially higher mass level.

Turn to the theatre, where Radio Drama has tapped, and the B.B.C.'s Listener Research Department has mapped, a vast reservoir of unsuspected Private Taste, with millions ready to enjoy Ibsen, Chehov, O'Casey, O'Neill, where before, at the most, thousands experienced such work annually. In Radio Entertainment, ITMA delights millions who by commercial canons could never have had the wit to appreciate this concentrated surrealism. Much the same might be said of the original Brains Trust, lately degutted. Again, the steady growth in general regard for serious music during the war, thanks to CEMA, Mr. Jack Hylton and others, suggests that once people can overcome their terror of the term "classical," wider fields await Vaughan Williams, Arthur Bliss, Benjamin Britten, as well as Ivor Novello and Irving Berlin.

In the same way, Mr. Allen Lane blew up the chronic publisher cliché that "only a few thousands would buy serious books anyway." Penguin sold Freud in tens of thousands. Mr. Edward Hulton broke parallel ground (and heads) with his vast *Picture Post* public. I could add scores of illustrations. I do not suggest that all our citizens are latent connoisseurs. I do suggest that many are ready to be led towards "better" pictures, curtains, films, gramophone records, poetry, books. For ordinary hearts have a deep lining of good sense, obscured by patterns imposed from above, from the more "cultivated" who constantly underestimate or overlook the

less. The public see what is put before them, and pay for what they see. Aesthetic *acts of volition* amongst the mass are few. There is little democracy of design, which is fixed by firms with (usually) absolute and (almost always) out-of-date dogmas about popular likes and dislikes.

Most public design is determined by convention, habit—particularly by the habit of those who produce and sell the designs. The maker of common objects underestimates, as does film producer, painter, or keeper of local art gallery, the intelligence and innate awareness of the man in uniform and the woman at the work bench. All sorts of assumptions have grown up—I've heard them endlessly at business lunches—about what the public likes. Because people go on paying for a thing, it doesn't mean they won't pay as much (even more) for something different, provided that it is firstly available and, secondly, respectable. It pays producers of everyday design to exploit what is familiar and already designed. The line of least resistance is the line of most profit. It is easier to play on the known, to exploit the lowest common multiple, the L.C.M. of the human mind rather than the H.C.F. And on the short view it is safer to take no risks with experiment, exploration, and invention. The wide background of childishness, under-education, is there to be cashed in on, where ordinary habit will not do the trick. Popular song-writers cash in on it. Newspaper astrologers cash in on it. Hitler cashed in on it so successfully that he nearly crashed in on civilisation.

I am worried by the over-attention paid by planners to formal patterns and logics, without comparable attention to underlying taste and aesthetic design. On the newer housing estates the inhabitants are often less happy than the old. In Mass-Observation's book, "People's Homes" (John Murray), we have shown how housewives are influenced by quite minor points of detail. This is broadly true in every field. Things are appreciated, not only because they are convenient, but also—and to an extent seldom realised—because they are comfortable, not only physically but *mentally*. Public Design is only the crudest indication of Private Taste.

The more producers of material things neglect aesthetic details, the more they build Dagenhams of the mind in flower beds or aluminium, chintzes or china, the more they inculcate the habit of receiving with hollow impassivity whatever happens to be provided, a Landseer or a Munich, bad news or bad design. Democracy depends on acts of volition, the constant exploitation, variation and proliferation of alternatives. Apathetic taste shows not only a particular cultural weakness, but also a weakness in democracy as a whole. Our much ridiculed Victorian ancestors had a taste of their own. The *acts of volition* employed in furnishing a living room were often so numerous as to seem now grotesque. We, scorning the museum-like result, have replaced its sometimes grotesque, but careful and occasionally fine ornamentation by mass-produced shim-shams, a girl in a bathing dress holding a leashed Alsatian, or a bakelite ebony elephant supposedly from Ceylon, on a mass-produced pseudo-walnut sideboard. What have we in common use to-day approaching the loveliness of early Worcester china, or XVIII century furniture, or the Cotswold cottage? We do not need to revive old designs, which, like handloom and stocks, are past. We do need to recognise that *we must relate material objects to life and beyond life.* Without this, ordinary living is incomplete.

Humanity has a basic decency of taste. Good taste is simply using your senses as any sane human should. The Malekulans of Melanesia are cannibals, naked, sleeping on the bare floor, unable to read or write or ride a bicycle. Yet they daily concern themselves with ballad and song, music and ballet, painting and carving, natural history, historical knowledge, excitement about stars. Any self-respecting Malekulan is competent in these affairs. Our industrial civilisation has drawn us to the extreme where very few people are left with any sort of personal creative art. Not only has the artist become exclusive, but appreciation of the artist's form has become exclusive. I deny, from all my experience and observation, that *this is a natural or necessary state of affairs.* In my view it is possible to achieve a much higher pitch of public appreciation. The urban worker is still thrilled by a daffodil or the white wave on a sunny sea. That is taste. In our indoor world of mechanically manipulated time, natural taste is inhibited. A small but vital area of life's appreciation is cut off. People don't consciously realise this, but when new opportunity provides, they are ready to take it.

The industrial revolution brought ugliness in the midst of beauty, took people away from home and land into crowded aggregations at places solely designed for machine work. The work was to profit employer and employee too; both sought as much money as possible in as short a time as possible, so as to get away and spend it *living*. The economic, physical and psychological divorcement of work from leisure has led to a whole chain of workless passivities like movies, football pools, Blackpools, greyhounds, sobsongs, striptease, short-term horizons, Friday to Friday objectives. How false, alas, is Noel Coward's remark (in "This Happy Breed") that "We're used to planting things and watching them grow." The re-romanticising of work may at once sound an absurdity. It is nevertheless a necessity. Design is one essential step in reintegrating job with life and wife; the weekday light hours with evening's peace. At work and at play we have to make new designs and to *popularise* existing ones. To popularise is to extend the area of appreciation, giving private taste the opportunity of many alternative acts of volition. This is to be distinguished from *vulgarising*, which is popularising at the expense of watering down or topping up the original—a Gershwin souffle or Royal Academy rissole. The "cultivated man" naturally fears the latter process; in consequence he unfortunately often opposes the former, and does not benefit from being exclusive, like amethysts or old brandy. It is unlimited in the number who can enjoy and the period of enjoyment. Many will never consider Vaughan Williams or Graham Sutherland. But many others could share more nearly the tastes of Sir Kenneth Clark or Mr. Osbert Lancaster. And if—as I argue—they could, then they should.

TOM HARRISSON

THE ELECTRIC KETTLE

TAMARA Semyonov, undoing a paper parcel, shouted excitedly: "An electric kettle!"

Yakov Borisovitch looked at the purchase condescendingly.

"In common parlance it's called a kettle," he said. "But remember, my dear, the correct term for it is a Heating Device. I myself would call it a conductor of culture and civilisation . . ."

The happy couple examined the article from every angle. The plated handle, the yellow flex, and the shining copper were all very pleasant to look at. And on the back was a small plate setting forth the performance of the heating device. It apparently used up 7 kopeks-worth of current and boiled in 12-15 minutes.

Yakov Borisovitch, gingerly holding the kettle, went out through the door.

"I will fill it with water and give the neighbours some propaganda with it," he said to himself. "It is most important to introduce culture into life. I have always been very enthusiastic about that sort of thing."

But for some reason or other his wife seemed troubled.

"Yasha, perhaps you'd better not. Perhaps you'd better not show them the kettle—I mean the heating device. I've got rather an uneasy feeling about it."

But Yakov Borisovitch had already started to go into the hall, triumphantly holding his kettle aloft.

There was a crowd of people and a great deal of noise in the communal kitchen, but when Yakov Borisovitch entered with his kettle, silence fell.

Yakov felt that something was wrong, but he said quite briskly:

"Look, a heating device! I can recommend it to you from the point of view both of economy and culture."

Someone by the stove giggled, and the grocery manager's wife said abruptly:

"We're not going to have any arguments about culture and economy here. Our accountant can see to that."

Many hostile voices were then raised about the waste of electricity and about the growing bills. Yakov Borisovitch quickly filled the kettle at the sink and returned to his room, somewhat put out.

Later a kind woman from flat No. 8 looked in.

"It is a pity that you showed them your kettle," she said, sadly shaking her head.

"I wanted to introduce culture and civilisation into our lives," said Yakov Borisovitch obstinately.

"You're just like a child," commented the old woman, sighing again. Then she went on—

"They've got culture already. They've had it a long time. Each one of them has probably got two electric saucepans, and three electric irons hidden under the bed. But they're a wily lot, and they're always on the look-out for anyone who'll pay a bit extra for the electricity. And as you showed your kettle everyone will probably use more current on your account, and you'll have to pay it all."

At the end of the month the stupefied Yakov Borisovitch received an electric bill amounting to 45 roubles 92 kopeks instead of the usual 3½ roubles. In despair he went to appeal to the house management committee.

"Comrades," he pleaded, "is it possible for two people to use up so much electricity just for making tea? If I'd opened a tea-shop and engaged a staff for it, even then I wouldn't have used as much electricity as that. There was a guarantee with the kettle that it wouldn't cost more than 2-3 roubles a month."

The members of the management committee only laughed.

"Two roubles!" he protested. "It's a cheating device, not a heating device. I'll make them pay for it. I'll appeal to the court. In some way or other I'll make them pay!"

Later in the evening, Yakov Borisovitch put his coat on, turned up his collar, pulled his cap over his eyes and went out. He approached his neighbour's windows and peering in through the net curtains he saw the greengrocery manager's wife bending over the table where she was ironing something large, pink and spotted—with an electric iron. On the table beside her lay a neatly arranged pile of ironed washing.

Quietly he went over to the next window.

The family of Yorshkov the engineer was sitting at the dinner table on which stood a shining electroplated casserole with an orange flex leading to the power plug. Yakov Borisovitch, chuckling to himself, stealthily went on.

The last window belonged to the kind old woman.

"Well, I don't think it's necessary to look in *here*," he said to himself. Nevertheless he glanced through the window.

There was neither kettle nor casserole in the room. Yakov was about to turn away when he caught sight of a grey flex lying right across the room, coming from under the bed. At that moment the kind old woman got up from her chair, carefully looked around, crossed herself, and lifted up the bed coverlet. An electric oven was standing under the bed!

Yakov Borisovitch could stand it no longer. He banged the window pane with his fist, rattling the window panes and making the old woman scuttle away like a rabbit.

Next morning, coming into the kitchen, Yakov Borisovitch remarked carelessly to the housewives:

"Oh, by the way, I got rid of my kettle. It

wasn't much good. I gave it to my mother-in-law . . ."

The same evening a rumour was spread by the neighbours that Yakov Borisovitch had obtained an assortment of heating devices including a powerful electric stove and even a special device for boiling eggs.

"These neighbours have no conscience whatever," sighed the kind old woman.

V. KARBOVSKAYA

(Translated by Musia Renbourn)

THE MOVIES

"Masquerade," at the Tatler

M.O.I. Films

Can you imagine Denham, Elstree or Ealing producing a film of *Childe Harold* or *Don Juan?* Of course not. A story "of the period" written by someone with rather less talent than Byron is as near as they'd ever dare to go. For Byronism on the screen we must turn to the surprising Russians: *Masquerade*, based on a poem of Lermontov, is Byronic through and through. The hero has, not a limp, but a secret grief, that "hellish contempt for everything," which inevitably tempts fate. Scenes in a fashionable gambling room, the tense play and hysterical interludes, the faces cunning, dare-devil and foppish, set the tone of the drama. Arbenin (Nikolai Mordvinov) is, of course, a superior being; there is something in him not only of the Byronic hero but of Baudelaire's dandy (to come later in the history of Romanticism), and the actor's features give him at times the look of a less ascetic Baudelaire. He stalks pleasure while condemning it, carries doom to the gambling table and the ball room, rescues a friend from ruin and then suspects him, enacts a drama of jealousy comparable with Othello's. His wife's bracelet dropped at a masked ball is in this case the excuse for tragedy, and the Iago of the piece, an intent spectator at earlier moments, does not reveal himself till the end when murder has been accomplished. Unlikely material for a film! But Gerasimov (director of the very different and delightful *The New Teacher*) achieves wonders with a sinister elegance of photography and acting on the heroic scale. It is a pity, of course, that we cannot follow the poetry of the dialogue, which tends to slow the action and in flashes of prose translation has a melodramatic ring; but the skill of director and actors makes even this difficulty unimportant. This two-year-old film is much more than a pious commemoration of a great poet's centenary; film-goers who have never enjoyed a poem or a story of Lermontov would grasp something of his spirit from *Masquerade*. Perhaps there was, to a Communist taking up this theme, some satisfaction in depicting the futilities of a hated old society, but Gerasimov has been true first of all to his original.

A new batch of M.O.I. films includes two-minute "official trailers," a political cartoon for showing in the Near East, documentaries on road accidents, bomber factories, shipbuilding, Army instruction, and occupied Norway. The most ambitious of these, and the only one to be shown to the general public, is Crown Unit's *Before the Raid*. The atmosphere of a Norwegian fishing village under the Nazis has been reconstructed in Cornwall, and within its limitations it is a moving and soberly dramatised film. One takes the good qualities for granted: a sensitive script (Laurie Lee), good direction (Muir Matheson) of the open-air kind, a solid musical background. What is lacking is expressive emotion on the part of the actors or the harried carelessness of people caught by the news reel. A bit hushed, even a bit unreal, yet always with a camera angle or a cool glimpse of drama to carry us through. *Before the Raid* can be seen at the Empire this week, where it will have to compete with *Bataan*.

Much the best of the others is Army Film Unit's *A.B.C.A.*, an account of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs, which arranges discussions, brains trusts, wall newspapers, etc., for soldiers in training. The film dives here and there in an interesting subject and escapes the instructional note of so many official documentaries.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Sunny River," at the Piccadilly Theatre

This new musical play has much to recommend it. There are charming costumes (period 1800, locality New Orleans) and scenery, both the work of Doris Zinkeisen. There are Evelyn Laye, prettier than ever and singing enchantingly, and Edith Day, playing second fiddle so brilliantly that she becomes first fiddle whenever she is on the stage. There are Dennis Noble's admirable voice, several good tunes and, happily, no rows of frantically smiling, hectically kicking ladies. Because of these advantages it is easy to overlook a mimed opening scene which misses fire, a lack of cohesion in the plot and some schoolboy fun in the very luscious Patio of the Café des Oléandres. A final inducement to go is an engaging song (sung by Edna Proud) which reflects one's feelings on arriving at an overcrowded party: it is called "Somebody Ought to be Told that I've Arrived."

Variety comes back, London Palladium

Maurice Colleano is certainly the greatest of acrobatic wits. His ideas are as brilliant as his technique. His female impersonation is both bizarre and funny, and the stunt in which he and his partner do a rough-and-tumble with a balloon miraculously not broken between them is a new kind of triumph. The mistake in this turn is the inclusion of women; romance is not stimulated by acrobatics. For the rest the new show at the London Palladium includes Billy Cotton and his Band, the usual crooning and dancing and somersaulting (some of this is of a very high standard) and miscellaneous shows of very varying merits. Later in the programme we get Max Miller. It would be untrue to say that he brings down the house; it is at his feet from the moment he appears on the stage in his latest golfing costume. The laughter of the man immediately behind me was so deafening and indiscriminating that I could hear few of Max Miller's jokes; he laughed whether he could hear them or not. In that he was right, for Max Miller is too good a comedian to need words to convey his various meanings. As clever, and to my mind as distasteful an artist, as the British music hall stage can show.

THE HOUSE

THERE is a house, that is our life,
Massed in the shadow of its towers,
Where in some ante-room we move
And all the rest no longer ours.

Yet there behind the sealing doors
Deep curtained halls and galleries wait,
And paintings on the sunless walls
Are hung, for none to contemplate.

Who is the conquering heir shall claim
These treasures that the years increase?
Shall love reveal? In that fierce hour
All secrets burn towards release,

Then might the great bay windows blaze
With all the evening's airy fire
And through the wide-flung lattices
We'd hear, like childhood's lost desire,

The cou-rou of the doves that hide
In flowery branches starred with light,
And watch the glancing swallows dart
Through gardens long blocked out from sight.

But lovers fall apart, and still
Untenanted behind the stone
The house is hushed, and, fumbling, we
Are left with twisted keys alone.

When shall those blinds at last be raised?
When shall the years of waiting end?
Time does not answer: in the woods
The rooks from darkening skies descend.

JOHN LEHMANN

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Correspondence

REACTION IN THE SADDLE

SIR,—It is interesting to see how our increasing air and military successes in the war are bringing the politicians out in their true colours at last.

In 1941–2, when victory was by no means certain and criticism of the Government's direction of the war was running high, it became the fashion to promise far-reaching reforms for the benefit of the working classes. Even the most noted reactionaries became transformed almost overnight into eager benefactors of the community. We were promised "freedom from want," "social security," and "better education for the masses," to name but a few of the slogans of a year ago. In fact a dazzling picture of a better Britain through victory was dangled before our eyes, provided that we would defeat our enemies abroad by our work and sacrifice, and by the shedding of our blood and tears. Specious promises, unbacked by any immediate legislation, were made, and were believed by many. Public morale was stimulated, and people began to believe that if the struggle to win the war was to be long and exhausting, at least they were fighting to achieve the things that made life worth living. The Government had told them so.

But now in 1943 the scene is very different. Victory is more certain, people are apparently more content with the Government, and now at last, slowly but surely, the powers-that-be can cautiously emerge from behind their façade of Social Reform and give voice to their real opinions and intentions. Events of this year show that they are as powerful and reactionary as ever, and that their sole desire is to restore pre-war conditions as closely as possible, and to maintain the power of vested interests.

For example, the Beveridge plan was ruthlessly hacked to pieces, and to all intents and purposes its practical application shelved indefinitely, although a good deal of lip service was paid to its moderation and wisdom. Of the eleven new Ministerial appointments announced in January, nine went to the Tories (including six old Etonians), two went to Labour, and none to the Liberals. It is unnecessary to add further comment to this example of the "Old School Tie" holding on to the key positions of the Government.

The Trades Disputes Act still stands, and the Post Office workers are getting a touch of the mailed fist to enforce their quiescence.

Russia is skilfully but unmistakably cold shouldered, while other notable enemies of democracy whose names are well known to the public, are given generous if not preferential, treatment.

The talk of our leaders of industry now runs on the lines of "recoupement," "retrenchment," "postponement of reform" and other sinister phrases with which we are so well acquainted, and which mean in fact the abandonment of progress and the consolidation of things as they were before the war.

Let us make no mistake about it. The forces of big business and vested interest, acting through their instrument, the National Government, are determined to give as few concessions to social reform as possible, to approximate post-war policy to that of 1919, and to extend the monopolistic system of control whereby prices can be kept artificially high, and output at a correspondingly low level.

Unless the progressive forces in this country are strong enough to sweep the old reactionary ruling classes and big business interests out of the dominant position they hold we shall certainly face the identical conditions of 25 years ago, when the very people who had fought to win the war were given a travesty of their "land fit for heroes to live in," and had as their reward only unemployment, poverty and starvation.

39 Brooklyn Road, Bromley. M. M. BARON, B.Sc.

BROADCASTING

SIR,—The B.B.C. provides more dull speakers than brilliant ones, more music hall entertainment than stimulating controversy, more bad music than good music. Therefore, Dr. Joad argues, let us make the air free like the press, to competitive enterprise; and thus obtain programmes as good as those concerts by advertisers in the United States. May I

uggest that this view is based on three errors?
1. The best newspapers in this country do not allow eir advertisers to affect their policy. A sponsored rogramme exists only to satisfy the advertisers—or, orse, to serve some rich political organisation, that n afford to buy wireless "time."
2. In the United States Toscanini's orchestra can deed be heard once a week, and so can the most xpensive and popular comedians. But the general vel of broadcasts is far inferior to those provided by e B.B.C. Advertisers, moreover, are far more ostile than the B.B.C. to the expression of "radical" inions. The journals of the Left, corresponding the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, are bitterly pposed to the sponsored programme as a most power- l tool of capitalism and reaction.
3. This country, unlike the U.S.A., has to share its ve-lengths with the rest of Europe; and it is most nlikely that advertisers would waste the few wave- ngths available upon material unwanted by the great blic. Moreover, the amount of advertising money ailable in this country is far less than in the U.S.A. nd even there programmes of the Toscanini type e highly exceptional, a rare luxury or an occasional ill. The comparatively few programmes available re, I suggest, would be designed for the readers of e *Sunday Pictorial* and the *News of the World*—not the *Manchester Guardian*. I would add that patent edicines are among the chief goods advertised in is country. And for my part I would rather not ar a Beethoven Quartet broadcast than hear it terspersed, or at any rate introduced, with talk about litosis, blackheads and constipation.

I do not suggest that the B.B.C. programmes are tisfactory. They reflect the failings as well as the rtues of the British middle and lower-middle classes. hey are often stodgy, sometimes priggish, and not ldom inane. But they are most of the time above, d sometimes far above, the general popular taste. Dr. Joad ventures far enough outside intellectual d would-be intellectual circles, he will discover that e general complaint is not that the B.B.C. provides o few string quartets but that it provides any string artets at all. After the war listeners will presum- ly be free again to hear the stuff provided by adver- ing stations on the Continent for British listeners. hose who want such stuff will be able to get it. But the B.B.C. has to surrender to advertisers some of e few wave-lengths it controls, there will, I suggest, e far less good music than now and far fewer good lks. Alike artistically and politically, people like r. Joad will be the sufferers. Because the B.B.C. far from perfect let us not hand this prodigious eapon over to Big Business.

ROGER MARVELL

SIR,—The following extract from a letter from a cousin now living in New York might be considered relevant:

One horror you are spared is commercial advertising on the wireless. It drives me almost demented.

One switches on the news, and hears that General Montgomery has made more gains in Tunisia, and then the announcer in *exactly* the same tone of voice will say, "and if you would like to make similar gains against baldness, pink toothbrush, B.O. or what have you, use so-and-so's super duper Quacho," or words to that effect!

It reduces me to a state of trembling fury, so in consequence I hardly ever listen to the wireless at all.

K. M. C. EVANS-LAWRENCE

Whittington Court,
Andoversford, Glos.

STATE MEDICAL SERVICE

SIR,—Dr. Harry Roberts has again called attention to an important point, that in the organisation of the Socialist Medical Service it is necessary to distinguish between general practitioners on the one hand, and Hospital and Specialist services on the other. The work of the Specialist is in itself so interesting that he does good work without financial incentive, witness the performance of Specialists in the Municipal Hospitals and Armed Forces. But most of the work of the G.P. is so dull that he needs some incentive to give of his best. How can this incentive be preserved while reasonable control is exercised?

As Dr. Harry Roberts implies, not by putting all doctors on an equal salaried basis and denying to patients free choice of doctors. A minimal improvement would be the extension of the panel system to the dependants of insured workers. It is estimated that this would bring 90 per cent. of the population on to the panel. The remaining 10 per cent. of the population must also be brought on to the panel lest the doctors devote to them an unduly high proportion of their time and energy, which most of them would. Next the State must lay down the maximum number of patients which a doctor can efficiently handle. Within these limits the patient could be free to choose his doctor. Thus, everyone would have the same standard of medical attention, there would be free choice of doctor, and incentive for the doctor would remain, as the more patients he had within the prescribed limit the greater his income.

As for the Specialists in the hospitals, they would do their best on a salaried basis. But it must be clearly understood that the organisation of Municipal Hospital Services in this country is very unsatisfactory, in that the authority of administrative Medical Officers as distinct from the clinicians who treat the patients is excessive and calculated to discourage and thwart the enthusiastic progressive clinician and research worker. Roughly the present position is that the Medical Superintendant of each hospital controls the work of all the clinicians on the staff and is responsible for their work to the central executive upon which direct representation of the clinicians is negligible or nil. This fantastic state of affairs is a relic of the days when Municipal Hospitals attracted the dregs of the profession, when it could be said, for practical purposes, that there were at these hospitals no Specialists at all. But when State Hospital staffs are good and when each specialty is so vast it is clear that control by one man of the Specialists in all branches at any one hospital is absurd. Nor is this control only nominal. It has to be experienced to be believed. What is required is that the Senior Clinicians at each hospital are responsible direct to their own clinical seniors at a higher level than their own Medical Superintendents, and that these Clinical Seniors are directly and strongly represented on the central executive.

As for health centres, they will be of great help to the doctors, and some to the patients. But this is a small point. Let us concentrate on essentials.

DOCTOR (R.A.F.V.R.)

SIR,—In discussing the pros and cons of a State Medical Service, two points should be kept in mind. First, that the majority of the doctors who oppose the formation of a State Medical Service do so for reasons other than those of self interest. Most of them are men and women who have worked hard among every class of society. They know their patients intimately and care for their well-being. Many of them have had days of aching anxiety over a serious case. Few of them have had a night disturbed by their accounts which have gone unpaid. Their opposition is based on the conviction that a whole-time State Service is not the organisation best calculated to give that improved service which all agree to be necessary. Their good faith must be acknowledged.

Secondly, those of us who oppose the formation of a State Medical Service do so in no attitude of complacency. We are not satisfied with things as they are, but clearly see the defects of the present system. Far from opposing progress, we have repeatedly suggested improvements to the Government of the day; but our suggestions have been rejected on grounds of expense.

We view our work not narrowly or from the point

East Prussia

ROBERT MACHRAY

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of view of our own sectional interests, but as an integral factor in the social life of the nation. We have visions of a medical service able to inspire a new orientation towards healthier standards, by virtue of a fuller co-operation between general practitioners and the public health services. But we recognise that without concomitant improvements in education, housing, employment and nutrition, our best efforts will be frustrated. Our ideal is a scheme capable of providing the complete services of modern medicine for every man, woman and child, whatever their economic status. But we look back over the arches of the years which span the history of British medicine and we see that our free profession has given service to mankind of which it need not be ashamed. And we doubt whether, converted into a branch of the Civil Service, controlled by a bureaucracy which has frequently shown a decided tendency to stifle initiative, we will be in a position from which we may best help forward those evolutionary changes which we all recognise as essential.

A. E. BERYL HARDING, D.M., M.R.C.P.

RELIGION AND SEX JOKES

SIR,—Not many people will agree with your religious correspondent that the Catholic part of the Christian religion is full of fun. Nor can it be generally accepted that religion and humour go together, and certainly not sex humour.

Were I a religionist I would not mix my tap-room jocularities with any attempt at spiritual development through the agency of the Gods.

Religion is a serious matter, all Gods are serious. Ye Gods! there's nothing funny about ruling a universe full of half-baked humans.

Your correspondent, by joking about his God, the Mass, plus jokes on mother-in-laws and sex, is just showing subconsciously his contempt for that in which he believes he believes.

Dr. Temple, whom I recollect as a jolly and kind individual, has a sense of proportion which your correspondent would do well to emulate.

For goodness sake, let's joke as much as we can, but please allow religion to continue to be dismal. Joking about it and with it is something like the hysteria engendered by anæsthetics.

Nottingham. A. SELLS

IN THE STARS

SIR,—There have been many letters for and against "Vansittartism" in your columns. Usually they are concerned with intellectual arguments on one side or the other. Now I find that the non-existence of the Good German can be read in the stars.

Here is the actual paragraph.

> What can *you* do about all this? You can consider suspicious anything read or heard about "good Germans," "re-educating Germany," or humbug about "honourable capitulation." You can insist that we shall beat *and control* the European madhouse. You can shout down all "negotiations."

It was written by Lyndoe, astrologer of *The People*, a Sunday paper with 3,000,000 sales. No doubt it would be valuable to "suspect" these things if one can bring a trained critical faculty to bear on the problem. But, coming from someone with a reputation of a "Prophet," and being read by people of insufficient education, this is tantamount to telling them "There are no Good Germans; Germans are incapable of re-education." This is likely to turn 3,000,000 families unreasoningly against a policy of re-education. Astrology is becoming an increasingly dangerous political weapon. ARTHUR K. FRENCH

THIS ENGLAND

SIR,—Who would have thought there was such a close connection between plucked eyelashes and raised eyebrows? In your issue of July 31st, a copy of which has only just reached me, objection was taken to my prize-winning contribution to "This England" on the grounds that the item was taken from a humorous column. My answer is that the series of news-items in this feature had every appearance of being serious and factual, at any rate in intention, rather than officially funny. Whatever descriptive epithet be applied, presumably the incident did not originate in the fiction department. Nor was the quotation taken out of its context. I submitted the complete paragraph and underlined the passage you used.

As an erstwhile reporter, I regret any injury unintentionally inflicted on the professional pride of your correspondents. But I am now a sailor myself: hence my salute to naval enterprise, however unusual. Indeed, Leading Seaman Ogden's success opens up infinite possibilities. There may come a time when every self-respecting beauty-parlour is equipped with a refractory gas-stove. If eyelashes benefit by this treatment, why shouldn't beards?

I have sent the five shillings to the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust. J. R. TILL

PACIFISM AND BOMBING

SIR,—Out of the discussion in your columns on the bombing of Rome arises the statement by William C. Searle, that the pacifist "regards the saving of life as paramount and is not prepared to achieve other ends by a means which he regards as the greatest evil."

This short sentence contains two misconceptions. The *saving* of life is not a concern peculiar to the pacifist; on the contrary, soldiers, sailors and airmen make every effort, often at great risk, to save the lives of even their enemies should they have failed in killing them in the first place; witness the heroic rescues from sinking German ships and crashed aeroplanes.

It is *taking* life that pacifists regard as evil, but they also regard it as a futile method of settling disputes. It is a complete misunderstanding of the pacifist case to say that he is not prepared to achieve good by what he regards as evil means; the pacifist believes that it is *impossible* to achieve good by evil means.

When Germany first bombed declared "open" cities, and later bombed cities all over this country it was looked upon as a hideous barbarism. If it was an evil deed when the Germans perpetrated it, it is still an evil deed, and pacifists are sincerely convinced that no good will come from human beings destroying their fellow human beings whatever the method used. SYBIL MORRISON

Redcap, Greenstreet Green,
Farnborough.

THE COMMUNARDS AND THE LOUVRE

SIR,—In the letter from the late Algernon Charles Swinburne, invoked by Miss Rossetti to condemn the bombing of Rome, there are references which tend to perpetuate a misrepresentation. The poet refers to "the incendiaries of the Louvre" and its "attempted destruction."

There was no attempt to destroy the Louvre. On the contrary, the Communards, when they set out to burn the Palace of the Tuileries, piled sandbags against the adjoining walls of the Louvre to protect it. The Communards said of the Tuileries, associated as it was with the crimes of the *ancien régime*, "So long as the nest is there the birds always come back again." And so they destroyed the nest.

But of the site of the royal palace and grounds of the Tuileries they made a public garden of what had been a private place of the Bourbons. The Louvre still stands. I have been in it.

JAMES LEATHAM.

[The writer of this letter personally knew some of the leaders of the Paris Commune of 1871, and is the author of a widely circulated pamphlet on the subject.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS allow readers to post this paper to any part of the British Empire (excepting Eire and Northern Ireland) and to any country of the American Continent (excepting dependencies of enemy-occupied countries) but readers are advised to consult a Post Office or a newsagent before attempting to post elsewhere.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

GROWLING still, he went off at an ambling pace
his mule, under the burning sun; a sun which
lit the stones now, and made the stubble
ackle as if it was catching fire. At the gully
etween the two mountains he seemed to enter
to a furnace; and the village on top of the height
anging above the precipices, scattered between
normous rocks, mined with caverns which made
seem suspended in the air, blackish, rusted,
ppeared abandoned, without a shadow, with all
e windows open in the heat, like so many black
oles, the crosses of the church towers trembling
the sun-dark air."

This is a description of the country north of
atania in the summer, the country in which the
nglish, Canadian and America troops have
ately been fighting. I have taken this paragraph
om one of the few descriptive passages in
iovanni Verga's great novel *Mastro-Don Gesu-
ldo*. The soldiers in that heat-hammered island
ill appreciate the exactitude of Verga's observa-
on and perhaps the jolting of D. H. Lawrence's
anslation. The critic will observe how the
hrases which do not directly describe heat, most
tensely convey the sensation of it. "Furnace,"
of course, direct enough, and if you have looked
own an industrial furnace, one of those long,
hreous, silent and unsurpassably intent corridors
short flame, the word will not be simply a con-
ntional literary metaphor. Furnace is indeed the
ly word for a mountain gully under a vertical
n. But summer in Sicily does bring back to
y memory those black holes in the stone houses
d the darkening, smoked-glass effect of that
ramnical light. The sun is an enemy; earth
d sun are at war with each other, and the can-
ur of the Mediterranean scene is not disclosed
til the evening when the battle has its sudden
uthern end or in the early morning, before it
s begun.

Those are the hours when we can think of
heocritus and the Greeks. But in the middle hours
f the day images of violence come into our minds.
e think of earthquakes, the mafia, the bombs
d shots of the factions and all those tales of
oiling jealousy, the Judas kiss of the duellists
d the long knife lying in the flat of the hand.
was, after all, upon Verga's story, *Cavalleria
usticana*, that Mascagni built his opera. The
ory was not romantic southern nonsense. We
w Sicilian violence transplanted in Chicago
few years after Verga's death, a violence still
ive, spontaneous and quite outside the range of
ir moral judgments. It belonged to an earlier
lture than ours and strangely enough to that
storal world of the delightful Theocritus. The
eet notes of the reed were drawn from the lips
men enjoined to kill in certain psychological
uations. But what went on behind the vio-
nce? What was life like in the broken streets
the mountain towns and villages? Verga, who
d been born near Catania in the 'seventies,
me back from Naples when he was about 40
see. His journey was one of those returns to
e source which are commonly so fruitful in the
es of artists. He was tired of writing novels
out leisured people who make love to one
other's wives and who go on chewing over the
ally not very astonishing sensations which they
ve detached from the meat of living. He had
thing new and certainly nothing brilliant to say
out the subject. He came to Sicily to get back
something more important, which was going
be stark in the manner of Zola. And, first of
, Verga was stark. *Cavalleria Rusticana* is an
mirable, naked story, ruthlessly economical
d as plain a piece of surgery on the passions
you could ask for. It is more than surgery:
e more terrible Sicilian knife is at work. *La
upa*, the story of a man-devouring peasant
oman who has to be killed by her son-in-law,
is another of the same kind. There is something superb, an excess which amounts to poetry, about these acts of transcendent psychological justice among people who are blinded by the rage of honour, amid starvation, crippling toil and rags.

And then the people became less of a spectacle to Verga. After all they were his own people. He got back inside them. There was not much inside them, in our sense anyway, for they were southerners without introspection, black and white in their souls like their light, but as a society they had a great deal. Verga planned to write five novels, each one to deal with a class in Sicilian society. The first dealt with the poor. (An American translation exists.) The second dealt with the people who are just above the masses and this one, *Mastro-Don Gesualdo* was translated by D. H. Lawrence, who was just the man to feel an idiom. In this book you will find what it is that lies behind the Sicilian violence. The answer, according to Verga, is more violence. Violence of tongue, violence of will, greed, push, scramble, gossip, the awful ruthless, comic, bitter, incorrigible barnyard fervidity of family life; fights for money, fights for food, fights for possession. Misery is the basis of it, the misery of poor land, the misery of the isolated towns where the nail-scratches of scandal and contempt are scrawled over everyone's life. The beautiful are the humble and submissive who will not join the fight; worse luck for then, they are kicked out and trodden on and their poor-spiritedness is a byword. So we should describe the people in Verga's novel and yet they do not distress us. Only the suburban townsman idealises the countryman and is shocked by the malignance of country life and its poisoned solitudes. Only the suburban townsman conveniently forgets that the countryman must fight for money and property like the rest of the world. Far from distressing us, Verga's people gradually take possession of our minds, seize us with their grasping hands, harangue us about their case until we are forced to see the point of it, and to see that here, in this ludicrous family screeching about pride, money, marriages, and ownership, something elemental is taking place. His people are able to convince us of this not merely because it is true but because Verga is a very considerable novelist. He has a rich range of mood, a pungency of metaphor; something in him is equal to the clamour of the heart, he has a comprehensive grasp of scene; and without being naturalistic he seems to be able to pull up people by the roots straight out of nature and put them, rife as they are, upon the page. They come out with such vocal, physical emphasis that at first one is stunned and deafened. Verga depends on the crackle of his dialogue and on a allusive atmosphere which each sentence creates. You have to watch that and keep your senses keen or you will miss his transitions. And then these Sicilians think and feel at the tops of their voices. Their bellies are full of poison, their mouths spit bile—a vast amount of bile is spat in this book; Lawrence must have loved the sheer anger of it alone—and in a few pages you will see people compared to vipers, wolves, hounds, tigers, wasps, pigs, cows, donkeys, scorpions and vampires, a whole menagerie. All this makes the early chapters trying until you acquire a kind of sardonic animal grin yourself; then things go splendidly.

You notice that Verga is not a regional novelist in the provincial sense of the word. *Don Mastro-Gesualdo* is no more regional in this rather derogatory meaning, than Turgenev was in *A Lear of the Steppe*. No, Verga is European and modern. His visual power which is heightened by his constant use of peasant metaphor and his identification with the peasant mind, is very modern. This visual quality is one which literature has developed, I think, to fill the place previously taken by traditional generalisations: the traditional Catholic novel, for example, about Sicily had no need of this physical vividness. Verga, no doubt like Cézanne, supposed he was being scientific. Now the kind of style I have described is boring after a while, unless the human heat of the book grows until it becomes convulsive and momentous. And Verga's story does grow. We see Mastro-Don Gesualdo, a common worker on the roads, in his first rise in the world. First his fight against his own family over their petty trade; then his marriage and the fight against his wife's aristocratic relations—they are a scarecrow lot of decayed aristocrats but not too grand to smell the main chance a long way off—then his fight against the town's jealousy of his wealth. And finally his fight against his daughter and her husband who is a duke. In that last fight Don Gesualdo reaches the rigor of spiritual agony. The struggle begins when the cholera has driven his patriarchal family to the mountains. It develops when revolutionaries from Palermo incite the peasants to get back the common lands which he has taken. It gets the better of him when he has to fight for command not merely of his property but of his wife and daughter. He defeats his daughter but loses the wife who has never loved him. The whole world rises against him. They see his weakness. He is not a monster but, searching for power, he has forgotten he is capable of sorrow and meaner people spring upon the shoulders of this man whose will has been exorbitant. There, it occurs to me, is the Sicilian subject as one sees it in Verga; exorbitance. A man must carry his passions to the extreme and fate, like a counter logic, will come down the road to meet and defeat him, not with one clean blow but a long, slow bludgeoning, beating him to his knees and then down into the dust of the greedy generations from which he sprung.

The intensity of Verga is achieved by an intensity of detail. He is totally without rhetoric. Of a suspicious man he writes: "Don Ferdinando, always after them, sewed to their heels, silent . ." Of the Duke's servants in Palermo in the wonderful final scene when Gesualdo lies dying among the idle footmen in his daughter's grand house: "An army of lazy rascals, lackeys and chambermen, yawning with their mouths shut, walking on tip toe and serving you without saying a word . . ." Those phrases take one back to Browning's *Ring and the Book*. But thinking about this intensity has led me to forget Verga's comic gift. Verga saw the fantastic comedy of the family struggle. He saw the sardonic farce of Sicilian politics, and how much they depended upon local personalities. The intriguing priest, for example, who gets the men of property on to the revolutionary side so that they can save their property, is a real, slippery beauty. Who has not met that busy little ferret? Then there is the young Baron seducing the awful touring actress by sending her food to guzzle from his mean mother's larder; and there is the christening scene where all the relations get in their digs at the right point. They all hate Don Gesualdo, and very likely the child is not his. An important point to notice in Verga's dialogue is that people do not always talk to one another. They declaim out of themselves.

> Don Gesualdo kept on chatting with Cousin Zacco, each of them with his heart in his hand, oh so friendly! Then the baroness spat out the question that was boiling inside her:
>
> "Is it true that your husband lends him money—on the quiet?—Have you seen him come here to him? Tell me, what do you know?"
>
> "Certainly, certainly," replied Don Gesualdo at that moment. "You must take children as they come."
>
> To confirm this Zacco pointed to his own girls ranged in a row like so many organ pipes, modest and pleasing.
>
> "Look you. I have five girls, and I'm fond of them all alike."
>
> "Why, of course," replied Limoli. "That's why you don't want to marry any of them off."
>
> Donna Lavinia, the eldest, threw an ugly look behind her. "Ah, are you there?" said the baron. "You are always ready, like the devil, in the litany, you are!"
>
> All at once down in the square below there exploded the deuce of a noise of crackers . . It was Santo, Don Gesualdo's brother, celebrating the baptism of his niece in that fashion, in his short sleeves, on all fours down there below, with a lighted fuse. Don Gesualdo opened the window to pour out a sackful of abuse.
>
> "Fool! You'd have to be doing something!

Mastro-Don Gesualdo. By GIOVANNI VERGA. Trans. by D. H. Lawrence. *Jonathan Cape*. 3*s*. 6*d*.

Cavalleria Rusticana. By GIOVANNI VERGA. Trans. by D. H. Lawrence. *Jonathan Cape*. 3*s*. 6*d*.

Fool!" The friends calmed him.

"Poor chap! Let him alone! It's one way of showing his pleasure."

A novelist is tested by his power to sustain long scenes and large groups of people and by his power of continual dramatisation. He has, so to speak, to break a marriage, a birth, a death, or some enterprise into living fragments. This gift of fragmentation is given only to the greatest novelists; lacking it, the glib second rate ones, are perhaps more quickly read. They are certainly quickly forgotten. But Verga is one of the great in this novel, a Balzacian. He sees a society and that society working in men and women. Perhaps, like the Sicilian sun, he hammers his words too pitilessly on our heads and batters us with the theme of self-interest; but he has the space of the masters. But I would say to any young novelist who wanted to shake himself into a fresh consideration of the art of the novel, to get hold of Verga quickly. When Italians boasted about him in Paris before the war, they were not far wrong.

V. S. PRITCHETT

OPIUM IN THE COTTON KINGDOM

Millhands and Preachers. By LISTON POPE. *Oxford University Press.* 24*s.*

This is the best study of its kind since the classic analysis of Middletown by Mr. and Mrs. Lynd. It is narrower in scope than that unsurpassed achievement, but one reader, at any rate, can bear testimony to the depth and continuity of its interest. Mr. Pope has taken Gastonia, the scene of the famous strike of 1929, and studied with care and in impressive detail the part played by religious organisations in its community life. The result is a superb picture of a civilisation the moves of which it is difficult to fit into the conventional pattern of the America we know in Europe. For if the machines in the mills of Gastonia belong to the twentieth century, it would be easy to put the preachers back into the epoch of the English civil wars. From Mr. Pope's pages, it would almost be possible to reconstruct the climate of opinion which adapted mediaeval England to the claims of the rising bourgeoisie. Everyone is here from Richard Baxter and Thomas Goodwin to those Communists who are cast for the rôle of Fifth Monarchy men. It is difficult to exaggerate the value of the analysis Mr. Pope has made. I only hope that he will go on from this admirable beginning to the study of the preacher's task in a larger and more mixed community.

It is difficult for the reader of Mr. Pope's pages not to feel that, despite the refinements and distinctions he seeks to make, the churches in Gastonia are in essence an instrument in the hands of the millowners. The financial dependence of the minister upon the mills is overwhelming. They are conditioned, as preachers, to a theology which, so far as it touches the better-off part of the community, seeks, above all, to raise no delicate issues, and, so far as it is preached to the poor, corresponds pretty exactly to those ingenious evasions by which the poorer sects of the seventeenth century sought to find compensation for the inadequacies of this life. Where social problems are touched upon, the preacher deals either with the evil of drink or the sin of prostitution, both of which he can handle without entering the realm of industrial relations. The issues that are raised by the economic power of the millowner, the rates of wages, the level of taxation, the existence of trade unions, the provision of education, all of these are handled by the churches so that no question arises of a challenge to the millowner's sovereignty. I do not see how Mr. Pope can avoid the conclusion that he has provided a massive defence of Marx's famous dictum that religion is the opium of the people.

For it is the objective function of the churches described by Mr. Pope to hold together a culture in which the beneficence of the millowners is taken for granted. It is, indeed, hardly an exaggeration to describe the preachers as part-time employees of the mills. They do not challenge their masters; if they do, they do not stay in Gastonia. And even though one accepts in large degree Mr. Pope's implicit condemnation of the follies of the Communist Party in the strike of 1929, the inability of its leaders to grasp the meaning of the psychological conditions they confronted, it remains the case that both during the strike, and after it, next to the militia and the police, the preachers of Gastonia were the chief weapon in the hands of the millowners. Partly, they provided a religious sanction for the standards the millowners imposed; partly, they made Gastonia as a private province in the empire of King Cotton a domain in which it was immoral to doubt the virtue of allegiance to him. It is remarkable to note that, mostly, the preachers are men of little cultivation; but whether they serve the rich or the poor they preach a doctrine the one result of which is the safeguarding of privilege. Where one religious group disappears, the new one which takes its place is rapidly domesticated through financial aid by the millowner to the cultural pattern he desires to impose. The average minister whom Mr. Pope describes would, one can feel confident, regard Archbishop Temple as a dangerous radical; their outlook upon their time would command the approval of the Bishop of Gloucester and Dean Inge.

Apart from the extreme pacifism of some of the more curious sects, the doctrines they uphold would make it very doubtful whether they could accept any present member of the House of Commons to membership, with the possible exception of Wing-Commander James and Sir Herbert Williams. Mr. Pope seems almost to be writing of an epoch in which the modes of thought were extinct in this country about the time of the Tolpuddle martyrs. What he has to describe is a pietism, which is like nothing so much as the attitude of Mr. Stiggins, with the mill superintendents playing the part of Mr. Chadband. The millowners, quite obviously, had no conception of why the great strike occurred, and the ministers were even more bewildered by it. And in all the years that have passed since 1929, it is pretty clear that the churches have learned nothing; they still think of their mission as that of assisting the owners to maintain the traditional culture—patterns of the town. They lack courage and knowledge and determination. They provide the sanction of religion for a semi-peonage in their votaries and try to persuade them that this is the kingdom of heaven. Whatever the errors and blunders of the Communists, they did at least try to organise a great awakening. The one main anxiety of the churches in Gastonia was lest the workers should awaken from their sleep. It is hard to think of an influence more counter-revolutionary than those which Mr. Pope so vividly describes. Indeed, it would hardly be excessive to say that the ministers involved had either to preach their God as the Great Mill superintendent, or to leave Gastonia. It is difficult to feel greater sadness at the ease of the identification or the success of its attempt. What Mr. Pope has certainly done is to give a most admirable account of ecclesiastical bodies which would fit, without effort, into the habits of a Fascist civilisation. He makes the Anglican Church of Archbishop Temple seem brave and noble by comparison.

HAROLD J. LASKI

POETRY OF THE OTHER WAR

Anthology of War Poetry, 1914-1918. Assembled by ROBERT NICHOLS. *Nicholson and Watson.* 6*s.*

The proportions seem wrong: a hundred pages of introduction to barely fifty of text. Is this, one wonders, turning over the few chosen pieces, all that remains in verse of "the other war"? The old guard keep their positions—Rupert Brooke, Graves, Blunden, Sassoon, Wilfrid Owen; no dislodging or altering them; though the selection may uncover new facets, and single poems from the lesser known may add here and there to the perspective.

Colonel Cold strode up the line
(Tables of rime and spurs of ice),
Stiffened all where he did glare,
Horses, men, and lice.

Visited a forward post,
Left them burning, ear to foot;
Fingers stuck to biting steel,
Toes to frozen boot. . . .

Anthologists hitherto have missed that (the lin
are from Edgell Rickword's "Winter Warfare"
and one is grateful for the same taste which h
included a poem by Charles Sorley. "Rou
March," among many awed or bitter poe
about death, preserves its own attitude, whic
hasn't been taped and copied.

Earth that never doubts nor fears
Earth that knows of death, not tears,
Earth that bore with joyful ease
Hemlock for Socrates,
Earth that blossomed and was glad
'Neath the cross that Christ had,
Shall rejoice and blossom too
When the bullet reaches you.
Wherefore, men marching
On the road to death, sing!
Pour gladness on earth's head,
So be merry, so be dead.

Both the poems from which I have quoted a
conspicuous for their lack of self-pity; and i
general, despite Brooke and Flecker, there
remarkably little of the self-pitying stance, whic
has produced, for example, a good deal of mediocr
verse during the present war.

In comparing past and present (one of th
objects of this book) that is perhaps the first thin
that will strike the curious reader. But mor
than that, Mr. Nichols's anthology represents no
only a high level of poetic achievement but a care
fully studied outlook on war. It isn't an anthology
of the best war poems of 1914–18: Hardy, fo
example, Kipling, Laurence Binyon, and man
others are omitted. Nor of the poetry in gener
written during those years: Eliot and Lawrenc
inescapable influences, are both absent. The selec
tion has been made from a far narrower point o
view, so that certain realities of war and of thos
who fight them take shape and alter as the moo
shifts from trumpets to muttered oaths. Nearl
all the poems chosen were written by soldiers o
active service; nearly all the poets, too, wer
officers. Hence the feeling of isolation, of imper
sonal sacrifice, of almost fatherly detachment an
pity, to which Brooke dreaming of his six feet o
English earth provides an exception. Stoicis
is perhaps the only faith that survives wars.

Mr. Nichols discusses the psychology o
fear, courage, honour and isolation at som
length in his introduction, and has a numbe
of interesting things to say. "The sense o
shame," he argues in one passage, meaning th
national or individual fear of being prove
cowardly, "is what makes war possible." Whe
the moment comes in which the soldier "mus
face his fear, it is the will to overcome that fea
for the sake of overcoming it that sustains him."
The officer on active service, however ironical hi
moods, discovers "a certain austere beauty" i
this religion of Honour; talking to his men h
"accordingly addresses the hero in you, me an
the man next door with scorn." According t
Mr. Nichols the novels of the last war give n
indication of this code of behaviour, being writte
out of "individual enraged sensibility an
nothing else." (*A Farewell to Arms*, quite rightly
comes under this criticism.) He gives a list o
supplementary reading, good but limited almos
entirely to English writers. He went into the la
war with two masterpieces to sustain him, Tol
stoy's *War and Peace* and Vigny's *Servitude
et Grandeurs Militaires*.

The hundred-page introduction, in fact, ca
loosely in the form of a dialogue between th
author and a young friend, is a search for th
"truth about war" which the poems provid
only in moments of lyric or satire or jagge
insight. Graves, Sassoon and Blunden have a
turned to prose and autobiography for a satis
factory explanation of those years; and M
Nichols himself, rather belatedly, attempts no
to sum up and analyse a baffling experienc

The plan of the book, if one reads without impatience, isn't so lopsided as at first sight appears; it does stimulate far more than the usual anthology. I think Mr. Nichols could have achieved his intention even more vividly if he had adopted the method of Huxley's *Texts and Pretexts*. A commentary flowing round and mirroring the poems would have got rid of the awkward division of the book into endless introduction and too-brief selection. However, *Anthology of War Poetry, 1914–1918*, stands on its own feet as the portrait of an earlier generation, seen in the light both of the past and the present.

G. W. STONIER

THE COMPLETE QUAKER

John Woolman, Quaker. By JANET WHITNEY. *Harrap.* 21s.

The important saying that the founder of a Church may not comprehend his own doctrine might, I suggest, be illustrated by the striking contrast between the first Quaker and his most famous American disciple. Readers of George Fox's Journal cannot fail to see that in its author there were certain traits which were at variance with the true Quaker spirit, while any page of John Woolman's Journal and almost every recorded action of his life are in shining witness of that spirit, as the world has come to recognise it. Indeed, judged by this test John Woolman and Elizabeth Fry stand together and apart.

Woolman's background was the large Quaker community which was already, by 1720, well established in the Philadelphia and Delaware region. Their families were well-to-do, and the young people enjoyed more freedom than was customary in the stern society of the North-East. John Woolman, a sociable and attractive youth, early adopted the serious ways of the Friends. Being employed in a general store, with a good head for business and versatile talents, he had a sharp awakening when ordered to write a bill-of-sale for a Quaker who was buying a young Negro girl. He did not refuse, but in later years, being active as a conveyancer, he would say to a slave-holding testator, "I cannot write thy will without breaking my own peace." The slave-markets of the Delaware completed his conversion, and a first journey in the South determined his mission for life. Woolman was, apparently, the first avowed Abolitionist in America, as he was the first to note the evil effect of slave-holding on the Whites. His two Southern journeys were revolutionary in results, and the second, made when he was 35, was an enterprise of entire originality. In the interval he had visited New England and been outraged by the implacable temper of the slave-owners and traders, many of them Quakers. He knew nothing of compromise. On all occasions he spoke his mind, with extreme gentleness. He was the incarnate Quaker conscience, and although extremely sensitive, especially when in a strange household, he would go right through with it. A characteristic entry in his Journal is, "I used much plainness of speech with him, and he appeared to take it kindly." Amid the ostentatious hospitality of the South he insisted upon paying for bed and board. He would not be served by a slave. He would not taste sugar and molasses, or touch a piece of silver plate. And then, in his 40th year, at the close of a severe illness, he made a decision that marked him to the end of his days. Dyes also were produced by slaves. He became the man who wore undyed clothes. Besides, he explained, dye hid the dirt, and that was "contrary to the sweetness of sincerity." As a consequence he was now the most noticeable man in America; a little bothered at the start, however, by the fact that when he made this change in his habit fashion was prescribing a white beaver hat for buck and beau.

John Woolman's journeys did not, as many of his readers have inferred, take up the larger part of his life. But his writings, about which Charles Lamb gave a piece of advice that no one could follow, were unintermittent. He was the most expressive of Quakers and undoubtedly one of the best American writers of the eighteenth century. The Journal was intended for publication after his death. It overflows with Quaker piety, but is wholly free from evangelical outbursts. Woolman's religion found utterance in reason and persuasion. His anti-slavery tracts belong to those written things that have the force of deeds. He was 52 when, after a voyage in the steerage of a little ship, he arrived in London, and in his undyed homespun was a disruptive apparition at the Friends' yearly meeting. Immediately after this, and under his direct influence, the English Quakers issued their first manifesto against slavery, as, eighteen years earlier, the American Friends had done. In England Woolman was so shocked by what he deemed to be the sufferings of coach-horses and postillions that he would not travel by the stage or even send a letter through the post. He made his way to York, and there, despite the devoted nursing of his beautiful hostess, he died of smallpox—the one enemy, seen or unseen, that he had feared since the death of a favourite sister long before. He was convinced that evil was inseparable from luxury, but he was no ascetic. He believed in leisure as well as work, and in the plainest living that was compatible with physical well-being. In early life his business prospered, but he gave it up and chose to make his living as a tailor. No man of his age can have been identified with a more rigorous standard of principle and conduct, and he was a truly terrifying guest. Yet there is abundant proof that he was everywhere beloved.

It is not difficult to hear him saying to his Anglo-American biographer: "Friend, thou hast been diligent in thy task and careful over my writings. But why wert thou not content to abide by the written word? Thou couldst not know what my wife was doing in the forenoon, or what she served at our table. And was it needful for thee to make so many pages look unsightly by printing all the capital initials that I let fall in my Journal?"

S. K. RATCLIFFE

FORWARD TO CHRISTENDOM

The Judgment of the Nations. By CHRISTOPHER DAWSON. *Sheed and Ward.* 8s. 6d.

In a recent correspondence in this journal the rival merits of Christianity conceived as a code of ethics plus a belief in a supernatural world and of liberal Humanism conceived as a code of ethics minus the belief, were canvassed from the point of view of their comparative efficacies as swords and bucklers against Fascism and barbarism. "Your values cannot stand for long against Fascism," said the Christians to the Humanists. "Bereft of the foundations upon which they were based, they are like an engine with no fuel in its bunkers; they generate no steam." "That remains to be seen," replied the Humanists. "The liberal values have gone down on the Continent only because the liberal Humanists did not believe hard enough in their own doctrines; but there is no reason why they shouldn't."

Christopher Dawson agrees with the Humanists. He is prepared to concede that "a secular religion of human progress" can "arouse no less enthusiastic faith and boundless hope and love of humanity than any religious revival." The novelty of his treatment, the slight tack in the spiritual wind by virtue of which he veers from the courses both of the Rector and of the Editor, consists in his representation of both liberal Humanism and supernatural Christianity as allies in a cause

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John Woolman Quaker

JANET WHITNEY

Of English stock, John Woolman of New Jersey, was business man and itinerant preacher whose voice was among the first raised against slavery. He died at York, 1772. His Journal is read to this day.

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HARRAP

which Fascism repudiates; they are branches on the same tree now threatened by the Fascist axe.

For each has fallen upon evil times. During the first twenty-five years of the century the acids of modernity, administered first by Shaw and Wells, later by Aldous Huxley and the psycho-analysts, eat into the structure of the traditional faith. During the next fifteen it was the secular religion of humanitarian progress, whose political counterpart is social democracy, which was under fire. Foolish Christians see in the fact a sign of returning faith; their hopes, as Mr. Dawson rightly points out, are delusive. What has happened is that "the disintegrating movement which was first directed against institutional and dogmatic Christianity has now been concentrated against the Christian ethos and the moral and humanitarian idealism that was derived from it." But while the attack on the supernatural basis was launched by the intellectuals, the attack on the Christian ethos has been delivered by the Fascists. Thus it is the distinguishing contention of Mr. Dawson's penetrating and carefully worded diagnosis that the structure of democracy has already been undermined from within. Torn by its internal conflict, it must fight on two fronts, on the external front against the Fascists and on the domestic front which separates the religion of secularism, responsible for the progressive triumphs of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, from the exponents of traditional Christianity who have come increasingly to be identified with the maintenance of an obsolete political and social order.

This split, he contends, must be healed if the common civilisation of us all must be saved. For this is no ordinary war that is being waged, but a war between the traditional Graeco-Christian civilisation of the West and the forces of evil that would destroy it. The evil abroad in the world to-day is of a new kind; it is the evil done coldly and impersonally by puritanical men dominated by the will to power. Now evil is a progressive force; it grows with what it feeds on, and the dominance of the will to power which is also "the will to self-destruction" in men who "drunk and poisoned with power" increasingly guide the destinies of nations provides the right environment for its development. In face of this new barbarism "the cause of God and the cause of humanity have become one."

How, then, can the split in civilisation be healed? Humanity, Mr. Dawson holds, cannot save itself by its own efforts. "When it is left to itself it perishes, and the greater its power and material resources, the more complete is the catastrophe." Civilisation, then, must return to Christianity and the belief in God, for Christianity stands for nothing less than "the restoration and transformation of human nature in Christ—in other words, the creation of a new humanity."

This is a drastic recipe and I can only briefly indicate some of the steps by which Mr. Dawson seeks to commend it. Why, he asks, has Christianity so lamentably failed? Primarily, he answers, because of the religious disunity among Christians themselves. Mr. Dawson derives the splits and schisms which have rent Christendom from social conditions and conflicts. He brings great historical knowledge to the elucidation of this thesis—it has a curiously Marxist flavour, by the way—and is remarkably successful in establishing correlations between historical circumstances and religious divisions. Mr. Dawson hopefully suggests that just as social and political causes produced disunity in the past, so they are making for union in the future.

He holds that a Christianity which becomes a persecuted minority religion will also become a revitalised religion. It is only when men are required to die for their faith that they become capable of doing so. On the political side his argument points to the necessity for superseding some of the sovereign powers of the independent anarchic States and looks forward to the organisation of States into loose Federations with other States of similar cultural type. Ultimately we may look forward to a Federation of Federations.

I have contented myself with summarising this argument, because I do not feel that a review is the appropriate place for commenting on the assumption that conditions it. This assumption is that Christianity is true and that the Catholic church is the earthly vehicle of a supernatural inspiration which is of God. It follows, of course, that in the end God's will will triumph. "We know that the ultimate decision does not rest with man but with God and that it is not His will to leave humanity . . . to the slavery of the powers of evil. God not only rules history, He intervenes as an actor in history." If Christianity is true, this conclusion, I daresay, follows. But the conclusion is, it is obvious, one which is based less upon an inspection of the evidence offered by the contemporary world than upon a deduction from principles intuitively perceived to be true. While one resists the temptation to discuss these principles, it is impossible not to observe how often the argument wears the appearance less of a chain of reasoning which follows from them, than of a series of rationalisations which are designed to support them, as if Mr. Dawson was writing at the behest of an instinct to use his reason to find arguments to justify his intuitions. There is, for example, his habit of having it both ways. If Christianity is generally accepted, Christianity is generally accepted and will prevail. If it is the creed of a persecuted minority, "the common cause of Christianity becomes a reality and not merely a phrase. And there is a centre round which the scattered forces of Christendom will rally," so that, once again, Christianity will prevail. The failure of civilisation to establish a just international order and the war which that failure entails are "an inevitable result of the progressive secularisation of modern culture." The implication is that, when culture was not secular but Christian, there were justice and peace. In fact, however, the ages of faith were no whit less brutal or less war-like. I know, of course, that it is fashionable to say, as Mr. Dawson does, that the Christendom of the Middle Ages represented merely an external conformity to Christian standards, and that to-day we must look forward to a Christendom realised by "the power of the spirit." But Mr. Dawson gives no ground to those who do not share his assumptions for supposing that man is any more capable of being moved, still less of triumphing by the power of the spirit, than he has shown himself in the last 2,000 years.

C. E. M. JOAD

Week-end Competitions

No. 708

Set by Brian Hill

"A sweet disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness,"

wrote Robert Herrick. Competitors are invited, in not more than 20 lines of verse, to give Herrick's comments on the appearance of the A.T.S., W.R.N.S. or W.A.A.F.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, September 6th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

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RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 705

...t by G. W. Stonier

We offer the usual prizes for the weirdest examples of human or animal behaviour in poetry. Actual quotations (not more than 15 lines long), together with their sources, are wanted.

...eport by G. W. Stonier

The terms of this competition might have been ...mewhat better worded. The sort of "weird ...haviour" of human beings or animals in poetry I ...d in mind was not a pussy-cat and an owl going off ... sea in a sieve, but Rustum's (or was it Sohrab's?) ...lloquy with his horse Ruksh. Perhaps if I had said "unintentionally weird" this would have been ...iner. I apologise to those competitors—not very ...any—who sent in bits of *Sylvie and Bruno*, *The ...ncient Mariner*, nursery rhyme and Tom o'Bedlam ...llad.

Mr. J. B. Sidgwick wrote a letter so responsive to ...e meaning intended that I reprint it in full, only ...itting a final quotation:

> Sir,—It is cruelty to demand sources nowadays, when many competitors must be away from their books: both anthologies and memory are careless of documentary details. Were it not for this unreasonable stipulation, I should have submitted
>
> Earth from afar has heard Thy fame,
> And worms have learnt to lisp Thy name.
>
> . . . My grave's a bed,
> Where I lie down on roses;
> I lie in state, and meditate
> Upon the law of Moses.
>
> ...th efforts of unknown hymnodists. Another unusual ...tivity of worms is described—or, rather, advocated—...a hymn in the Wesleyan Hymnal, though I don't ...ow its number:
>
> O may thy powerful word
> Inspire the feeble worm
> To rush into thy kingdom, Lord,
> And take it as by storm.
>
> ...r there is the Babu poet's comment on the funeral ...f Queen Victoria—surely weird enough behaviour ...n the part of a monarch not only staid but dead:
>
> Dust to dust, and ashes to ashes,
> Into the tomb the Great Queen dashes.
>
> ...don't know the context of this couplet of Alfred ...ustin's—perhaps it would be less strange in its ...roper setting, though I don't really think so:
>
> Then I fling the fisherman's flaccid corpse
> At the feet of the fisherman's wife.
>
> ...las, all these are debarred by the harsh terms of the ...ompetition. I must therefore content myself with the following surprising episodes (you do not forbid alternatives, I am glad to see):

As yawns an earthquake, when imprison'd air
Struggles for vent, and lays the centre bare,
The whale extends his jaws' enormous size;
The Prophet views the cavern with surprise;
Measures his monstrous teeth, afar descried,
And rolls his wond'ring eyes from side to side:
Then takes possession of the spacious seat,
And sails secure within the dark retreat.

(EDWARD YOUNG: *The Last Day*)

And as the anatomist, with all his band
Of rude disciples, o'er the subject hung,
And impolitely hewed his way, through bones
And muscles of the sacred human form,
Exposing barbarously to wanton gaze
The mysteries of nature, joint embraced
His kindred joint, and wounded flesh grew up,
And suddenly the injured man awoke
Among their hands, and stood arrayed complete
In immortality—forgiving scarce
The insult offered to his clay in death.

(ROBERT POLLOK: *The Course of Time*)

J. B. SIDGWICK

One suspects any quotation from Alfred Austin; ridiculous couplets stick to him like Spoonerisms to Spooner; but in any case Mr. Sidgwick earns a prize with his last two passages. On the same high level are E. M.'s citation from *Aurora Leigh*, Archibald Gibbs's extract from *The Raven*, and the charming verse sent in by "Didymus." These four share equally a first prize of 16s. each. Consolation prizes of 10s. each to Ronald Mason and J. Drum.

(Behaviour of Marian Erle, on Aurora Leigh's consenting to her marriage with Romney Leigh.)

Her broad wild woodland eyes shot out a light,
Her smile was wonderful for rapture. "Thanks,
My great Aurora." Forward then she sprang,
And dropping her impassioned spaniel head
With all its brown abandonment of curls
On Romney's feet, we heard the kisses drawn
Through sobs upon the foot, upon the ground—
"O Romney! O my angel! O unchanged,
Though since we've parted I have past the grave!"
. . . . When he tried in vain
To raise her to his embrace, escaping thence
As any leaping fawn from a huntsman's grasp,
She bounded off and 'lighted beyond reach,
Before him, with a staglike majesty
Of soft, serene defiance.

E. B. BROWNING, *Aurora Leigh*, Book IX.

E. M.

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber-door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber-door,
With such named as "Never more."

POE. *The Raven.*

ARCHIBALD GIBBS

"By God's just judgment I am damned,"
With a loud voice he cried,
And then his coffin-lid he slammèd
And bolted it inside.

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL: from his "Life and Letters," by Charles Eliot Norton.

"DIDYMUS"

Unconventional and unrecognised arrival of noted Poet

But Milton entering my Foot, I saw in the nether
Regions of the Imagination—also all men on Earth
And all in Heaven saw in the nether regions of the Imagination
In Ulro beneath Beulah—the vast breach of Milton's descent.
But I knew not that it was Milton, for man cannot know
What passes in his members till periods of Space and Time
Reveal the secrets of Eternity; far more extensive
Than any other earthly things are Man's earthly Lineaments.
And all this Vegetable World appeared on my left Foot
As a bright sandal form'd immortal of precious stones and gold.
I stooped down and bound it on to walk forward thro' Eternity.

—WILLIAM BLAKE, Milton, Book 1, § 23, lines 4–14.

RONALD MASON

Whenever I walk in a London street,
I'm ever so careful to watch my feet;
And I keep to the squares,
And the masses of bears,
Who wait at the corners all ready to eat
The sillies who tread on the lines of the street,
Go back to their lairs,
And I say to them "Bears,
Just look how I'm walking in all of the squares.

(From Lines and Squares by A. A. Milne.) Published in "When we were very young."

J. DRUM

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OCTOBER newlyweds require flat, Epping district. Box 1645.

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